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SERMONS.

With the additional Note: p. 443.

SERMONS,

BY THE REVEREND

THOMAS FROGNALL DIBDIN,

M. A. F. R. S.

MINISTER OF ST. MARY'S BRYANSTON SQUARE, AND

VICAR OF EXNING IN SUFFOLK.

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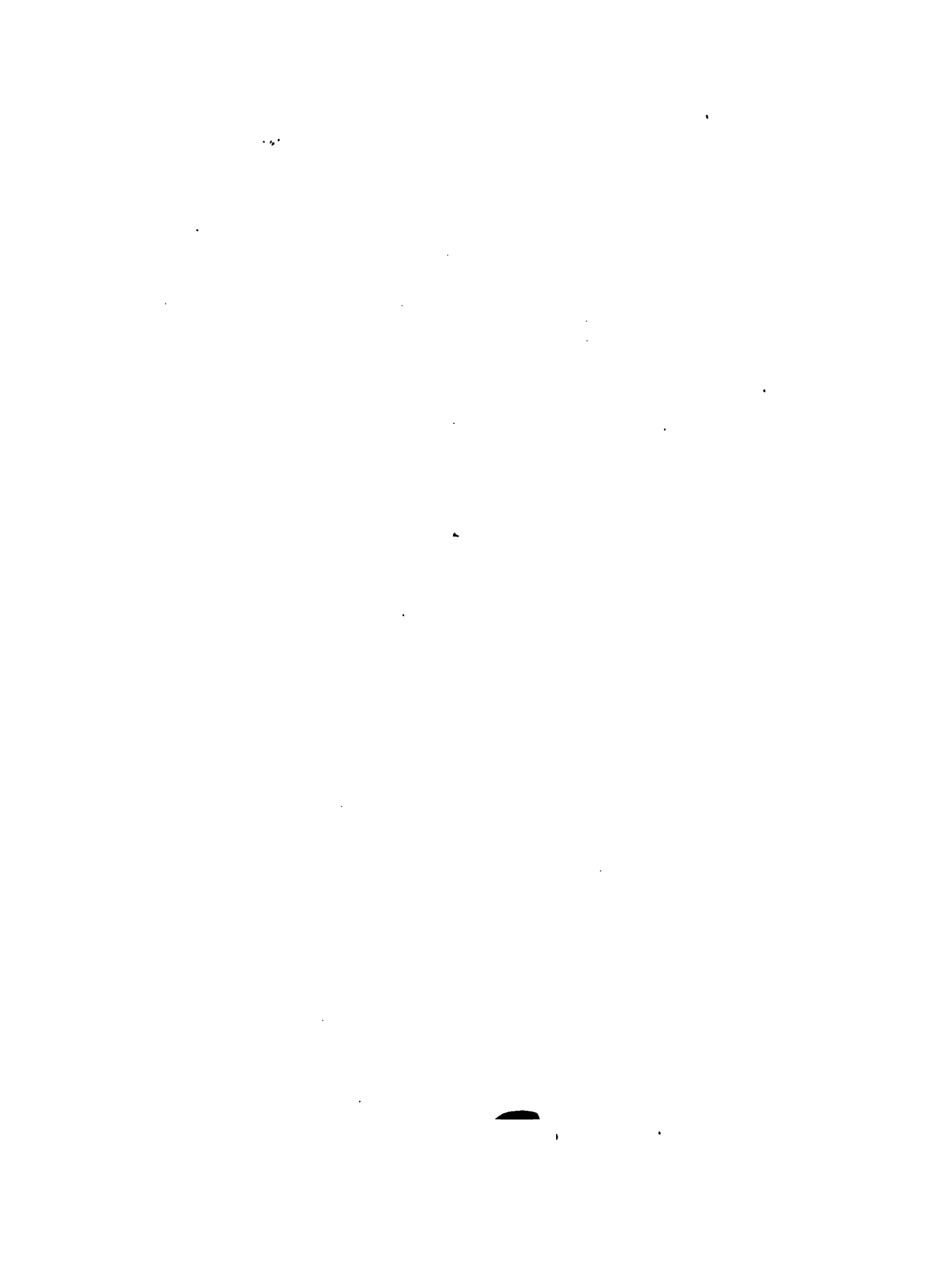
ST. JAMES'S;

FOR HARDING, TRIPHOOK, AND LEPARD,

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1825. p

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TO THE PATRON,
PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS,
AND TRUSTEES,
OF THE ST. MARY LE BONE
WESTERN NATIONAL SCHOOL,
These Sermons,
PUBLISHED WITH THE VIEW
OF BENEFITTING THE FUNDS
OF THAT INSTITUTION OF WHICH THEY ARE
THE ZEALOUS AND LAUDABLE SUPPORTERS,
ARE INSCRIBED
BY THEIR FAITHFUL
AND HUMBLE SERVANT,
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SERMON I.

PREACHED AT THE CONSECRATION OF ST. MARY'S,
BRYANSTON SQUARE, JANUARY 7, 1824.

Psalm CXLIV. latter part of 15th verse.

*Blessed are the People who have the Lord
for their God.*

THE Psalm, from which this text is taken, is remarkable for placing before us, in colours at once glowing and correct, the prosperity of a Nation as dependent on the vigour of its population, and the abundance of its resources: the former being distinguished by comeliness of person and comfort of condition, the latter, by fruitfulness of corn and of cattle.

The entire passage — or the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th verses — runs thus: “ that our sons may grow up as the young plants, and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple: that our garners may be full and plenteous with all manner of

store ; that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets : that our oxen may be strong to labour, that there be no decay ; no leading into captivity, and no complaining in our streets. Happy are the people who are in such a case, yea, *blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.*"

The text, of which the last sentence is composed, seems to be an illustration, if not a synonymous position, with the immediately preceding portion—namely, that the people will not only be happy who are in such a case, but that the people cannot be *otherwise* than so happy, who have the Lord for their God : that the belief and worship of that same God, who upholds and governs the Universe, is the true foundation of all national greatness, and the never failing source of all national prosperity. Or, as one of our more eminent divines and prelates* hath well expressed it, the happiness of a people " in such a case," consists in something far above riches and outward greatness — it consists in having the Lord himself, the supreme Governor of the world, to take care of them : they have his wisdom to instruct them : his

* Horne.

power to protect them : his mercy to pardon them : his grace to adorn them here, and his glory to crown them hereafter and for ever—and all, because they have the Lord for their God : not only for their light, their life, their hope, their help, their strength, their tower, their sun, their shield, and their exceeding great reward, but—“for their God !” Such relative situation being, in fact, most simply and strongly stated by Jehovah himself in the language of his prophet Ezekiel—“they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

These are the main, principal features, which mark the connection between a happy people and a protecting Providence. It was not, and it could not be, as in the practices of *pagan* superstition, that *each individual branch* of national prosperity had its peculiar, presiding deity : that corn and cattle, and wine, and youth, and age, was influenced by, and dependant upon, the capricious impulses of a power, prophaned by the title of God : and that, in consequence, the *united* approbation of these deities, (always discordant among themselves), was necessary to be obtained, in order that the *aggregate* of national happiness might be complete ! Blessed be God—no such wretched expedients, no such

desperate resorts, are, now, of any efficacy or avail. There is one Being, one Spirit, or Power, whom all civilised nations *now* worship; and the approbation and protection of whom, alone, leads to the realization of every wish, and to the supply of every want—and if our sons grow up as the young plants, and our daughters be as the polished corners of the temple—if our garners be full and plentiful with all manner of store, and our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets, — it is, because **THE LORD** he is our God, and because, in consequence, we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. “O go your way, then, into his *gates* with thanksgiving and into his *courts* with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his name.”

This, my brethren, is the great fundamental truth which I wish to impress strongly upon your minds — as the basis of the observations which are about to follow. “Blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God:”—but in order that we may continue to have this same gracious God for our Protector, let us adopt the council and imitate the conduct of the same great authority, who hath so truly marked out the beneficial ef-



fects of having the Lord for our God. The strongest, and the most binding link, between the Creator and his Creature, proceeds from *Prayer and Worship*. At an immeasurable distance, and inconceivably above all our comprehensions and capacities, and unmoved by any considerations of our merits alone, God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

What are the constant exclamations, prayers, and avowals, of David himself? He could be for ever in the Temple of his God. "One day (says he) in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness. Thy way, O God, is in the Sanctuary." And again, he feels encouraged to seek the temple of his Maker, by a reliance on his *mercy*—which he knew to be "over all his works." "But as for me, I will come into thine house, even upon the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple." But then, lest this feeling should produce a confidence approaching to presumption, the suppliant Monarch checks himself—by thinking on the requisite qualifications for prayer to God in his holy temple. "Lord, who

shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest on thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life: and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart."

There is however another point of view, as original as it is powerful, in which the inspired Psalmist takes occasion to dwell upon the efficacy of public worship, and which I shall impress somewhat on your consideration. In the 73d Psalm, and at the 15th and 16th verses, David says, "then thought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me: until I went into the sanctuary of God—then, understood I the end of these men." In other words, the Psalmist becomes vexed in spirit, dejected, and unhappy about the conclusions which he is *obliged* to draw from the premises afforded him by *weak human reason*. He again strives to understand it, but it proves too hard for him. What should he do? With an intensity of sensibility, and with an ardent love for the whole human race, his feelings, in such a crisis, would have overwhelmed him in despair: but, he considers within himself, whether there be not a *higher* power who may be able to assist his comparatively weak and darkened understanding: a power, "to



whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid." A conviction of the *existence* of such a power, stimulates him to find him—but where shall he have a *direct* communication with him? In that place, where, "when two or three only are gathered together in his name, he will not fail to be in the midst of them." He seeks him therefore in his SANCTUARY: in his temple of worship: and the *consequence* of this search is, that he *then* understands the end of these men. He then finds, that the wicked prosper for a while only to render their downfall more striking to others; and to convince a giddy and thoughtless world, that licentiousness and immorality can never conceal the real deformity of vice; and that the spots of that leprosy, which in Scripture is so frequently made typical of sin, can only be washed away by amendment of life, and sincerity of repentance.

The case of David is the case of *thousands* with whom we may be in the habit of associating. We hear on all sides complaints perpetually made, and conclusions as frequently drawn, of the success of the wicked, and of the adversity of the good; and perhaps, if our minds were not seasoned with some portion of scriptural knowledge, and

our hearts comforted by some portion of scriptural faith, we might as readily draw the same inferences as many who surround us. The truth is, that we admit that the Almighty is good and gracious, and that we ourselves are weak and defenceless, but we take not fit opportunities of invigorating our understandings, and comforting our depressed spirits, by seeking a communion with Him, who has told us only to ask and we shall have, only to knock and the door shall be opened. In other words, we are depressed at the prosperity of the wicked, but we go not into the *Sanctuary of God* to have our intellects strengthened, and our apprehensions dissipated. The Sanctuary of the Almighty is indeed the receptacle, as well of the broken and contrite, as of the joyous and contented, heart. The Spirit from on high equally visits the lowly and the lofty. We are, in all places of public worship, to draw near with faith—to make our wants and wishes known—to lay open our inmost thoughts—to confess our manifold offences—and to pray earnestly, and from the heart, for a portion of that heavenly instruction which is to make us wise unto salvation. The wants of the body, which are few, and

easily supplied, should be forgotten in the necessities of the spirit. The welfare of our immortal souls should alone concern us here : and whatever may have distracted our thoughts, and disturbed our repose, in the intervening period, — however our own misfortunes, or the prosperity of the wicked, may have staggered our faith, it is only by a communion with our Maker, and a prostration of our heart and soul before the throne of mercy, that such excitations can be soothed, and such afflictions removed. The world, immense, various, and inexplicable as it may appear, is under the government of an omnipotent and omniscient power. Ambition may sweep away the property of the innocent, to gratify its lust, and to extend its dominion—perfidy and rapine and violence may for awhile make havock with the good—yea, scepticism and infidelity may, for a season, undermine our faith, and cause our confidence to waver : . . . We think to understand all these things, but they prove too hard for us : until we go into the Sanctuary of God, and then we understand that they have only been permitted, as tests of our faith, and as trials of our obedience. Thus, you observe, that the principle of *piety* becomes a principle of

wisdom; and that the more, in places of divine worship, we ally ourselves with our Maker, the greater will be our security, our confidence, and our comfort.

Again, and under a very different point of view. Our miseries arise from causes, which we can neither foresee nor controul; and our murmurings are infinite in consequence. We lose the partner, or the child of our bosom; or we see the parent, whom we reverence, go down to the grave. We reason within ourselves, and ask — why these seemingly hard things should be? *We* approach our Maker within these *sacred walls*, and we find that a spirit of devotion, which they are so well calculated to excite, makes us understand them — and teaches us, that God is equally wise and merciful in all his works: and that, if he have snatched these objects of our warm attachment from evils to come, by taking them to himself, we have every reason to bless his holy name for those departed in his faith and fear, and to resign into his hands every sublunary concern. Our consolation is—that if they shall not return to us, we shall go to them.

It will doubtless, however, be urged by some, that, in *all* places, and at *all* times, we may have access to our Maker—and that




prayer is as efficacious in *other* places as *here*. The remark is unquestionably just: but, is it not often observable that those, who neglect to pray in *public*, and to resort to the Sanctuary of God, are, in general, not the *most* remarkable for their purity and correctness of life—and, perhaps not the *most* prompt to lift up their hands in private prayer?! Ingenuity is ever busy to shun the main path of moral and religious duties, under some ambiguous plea, or some artificial excuse. It is not by combating one opinion, that we of course adopt another in our usual line of conduct: for the truth is, that our duties lie within a plain and intelligible boundary; and that if we are disposed to shun the more *obvious*, we shall not readily obtain credit for practising those which are the result of a more *refined* reasoning.

Having thus, as I would presume to conclude, proved, in the first place, that national prosperity arises from the protection of the Almighty—and that the people are both happy and blessed who have the Lord for their God—and having in the second place proved, that, after the example of the author of my text, we must worship the Lord in his Sanctuary, and, as it were, in the Beauty of Holi-

ness, if we are desirous of the *continuance* of his divine protection, (which is also to bless our victuals with increase, and to satisfy our poor with bread), I proceed, as the next branch of this discourse, to touch upon topics which may be supposed to have a more immediate reference to the particular object for which we are this day especially convened.

The admission of the preceding truths, by every upright and enlightened nation, and a conduct the *reverse* of what that admission implied, would be equally unaccountable and censurable. Accordingly, as applicable to the sacred business of the day, it cannot fail to strike you that our *own* country has been abundantly anxious to give proofs of the importance of public worship, and thereby to promote the happiness of the people, and to insure the blessings of Almighty God. As population and as dwellings have increased, so temples of worship have been raised, to receive, not only the congregations of the faithful, but of all classes of Christians who choose to resort thither; and if it be asked whether these congregations belong to the *Church of God*, as well as to that of *England*, I answer, in the language of an eminent Divine, of the last century but one—when



schism, and opposition, and persecution, were in the most virulent state of activity. "That which makes every visible Church, to be more or less the true Church of God, is the greater or less efficacy or conformity of its public doctrine and discipline, for enacting and fashioning the visible members of it, that they may become live members of the holy catholic church, or living stones of the New Jerusalem."*

And this I take to be as applicable to our *own*, as to *any* church on the face of the globe. Nurtured and educated as you have been in that church, there is here no necessity to expatiate on the simplicity of its forms, and on the purity of its doctrines. "I shall only crave leave (borrowing the language of the most eloquent of our Prelates † of the same period with the authority last quoted) I shall only crave leave that I may remember Jerusalem, and call to mind the pleasures of her temple, the order of her services, the sweetness of her songs, the decency of her ministrations, the assiduity and economy of her priests and levites, the daily sacrifice, and that eternal fire of devotion that went not out by day nor by night. These were the

* Jackson's *Works*, vol. iii. 835. † Jeremy Taylor.

pleasures of our peace; and there is a remanent felicity in the very memory of those spiritual delights, which we then enjoyed as antepasts of heaven, and consignations to an immortality of joys."—And such, adds he, a little further, "IS THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND."


That Liturgy will be here duly read; and your responses and aspirations are expected, with the prayers of the Minister, to ascend to the throne of mercy—breathed forth from the inmost recesses of the soul. If, on the one hand, it be said that these temples, for the accomplishment of such laudable objects, have been tardily raised in proportion to the spread of population and the diffusion of wealth, let it, on the other hand, be remembered, that structures of this magnitude, cannot, and ought not to be, the work of precipitancy and haste; and if, as in the present instance, and as the slightest glance upon these surrounding walls will testify—ornament and elegance have been sacrificed to utility and accommodation—fail not to bear in mind, that the *brightest* ornaments of *all* public places of worship, and the most acceptable offerings at the throne of grace, are those, which it is in the power of *every* member of

a Congregation to bring with him ; I mean, the *living* ornaments of the heart and mind : a humble, contrite, penitent, and devout spirit : an abstraction from all surrounding objects, and outward temptations ; and an inward and intimate communion with your Maker ; feeding on “ him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving : ” an abashed and prostrate soul, which scorns all *consciousness* of superior merit and a *decided* claim to God’s mercy ; but which, leading each of you (in the language of the Apostle St. Paul) to “ lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting, ” directs those same hands to smite upon the breast and say, “ God be merciful to me a Sinner ! ”

These—these are the ornaments which best become a temple of worship, and the Sanctuary of the Most High. This was the spirit, as I would fain hope this discourse has proved, which actuated that monarch, who, of all men, was most assimilated to his Maker ; a spirit, indeed, manifested in the beauty, the force, the piety, the inspiration of his writings : and hence, having the Lord for their God, the people, under his dominion, were at once happy and blest.

In conclusion, therefore, within these walls

of Christian worship — constructed for the durability of ages — I beseech you, as a Minister and Steward of the Mysteries of God, to enter — with a humble and devout spirit — and to partake of the religious rites of your country. It will be found, that the most liberal allowances have been made for the administration of those rites to the poor, as well as to the rich : more than one *third* of the sittings in this Church being *gratuitously* reserved “for all sorts and condition of men.” While therefore, on the one hand, none are too high to be exempted—on the other, none are too low to be debarred—from a participation of the forms, ceremonies, and consolations, of the services of our holy church. We leave every denomination of Christians, and of worshippers of Almighty God, after their own forms and fashions, unmolested in the exercise of that worship. We do unto them, as every enlightened and upright man among them would wish should be done unto us — reciprocally hoping and praying, that “the good and true of heart” may meet with their reward here and hereafter ; but we exhort and entreat you—having entered these walls—to “pray with the spirit, and to pray with the understanding also :” not to be “high minded :



and to have no proud looks :” — and so, approaching the altar, to partake of the sacrament: to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the word of God herein read and expounded — and to be thoroughly convinced that the simple, earnest, and constant worship of your Maker, within the walls of his Sanctuary, is the surest way to make a nation happy, and for that nation to continue to have “ the Lord for its God.”

Yet a word, ere we quit a place so peculiarly calculated for the attainment of this desirable end. I might indeed make a studied and an honourable mention of the alacrity of the present period in raising such edifices of magnitude and cost, and in thus meeting the hearty wishes and desires of so many honest and pious subjects of the realm; but the praise due to those, who, in Church and State, and in the more respectable and better informed classes of society, have been more or less instrumental in carrying these salutary measures into effect, is a theme, that need not here particularly occupy our attention; inasmuch as I am persuaded it has found its due reward in the approbation of every well-disciplined mind, and in the sympathy of every honest heart. Upon a topic, therefore, thus



obvious, these concluding remarks need not dwell—but there is *one* thing, my brethren, which cannot fail to strike you as worthy of especial notice and commendation.

No well informed and thinking mind can contemplate the general position of this people, or of this country, of which its religious Institutions form so prominent a feature, without admitting that its prosperity, under almost every modification, is great and abundant indeed: that the Lord has been our God: and that a country, contemptuously designated nearly two thousand years ago, in the language of the most perfect of the Roman poets, as “almost severed from the whole world,” has been only *so* separated, in order to be more emphatically distinguished in after ages for its arts, its arms, its wisdom, and its worth: that there is not an ocean but has wafted its vessels of commerce, nor a territory but has been benefited by the commodities which such vessels conveyed; and that, while the more civilised and opulent nations have contented themselves with the usual interchanges of trade, the more barbarous and darkened countries have received from us the light of the Gospels, and the benefits of the Christian religion: the

blessings of many that were about to perish have come upon us—thus, through God's means and guidance, having been eyes unto the blind, and feet to the lame.

Finally—if these things be so—and if I have succeeded in impressing upon you the necessity and importance of the worship of your Maker, in his holy Sanctuary—and of the consequent prosperity of a people actuated by such sound and salutary doctrine—so, as the result of such impression, or conviction, be vigilant and wary against all assaults to overthrow it. There is, it cannot be denied, an active and a subtle spirit just now abroad, which is seeking how it may undermine the walls, and overturn the altars, of temples of Christian worship, and chiefly those which are reared and regulated by the ecclesiastical laws of this realm. Before you lend an ear, much more an assent, to specious arguments which discover imaginary, or aggravate venial, imperfections, you will not fail to bear in mind, that the work of dismemberment and destruction is both easy and rapid—while that of rearing, strengthening, and consolidating, is arduous and slow. You will farther be careful to distinguish between a spirit of cavilling and obloquy, which stops

at no bounds, and is influenced by no consideration, and that of a cautious and sober estimate of things—and, yet farther, between objections which grow out of sceptical principles, and those which appear to have some affinity with reason and Christianity. But most of all, will you be anxious to raise your hearts and voices against the wily stratagems of those, who, from a studied neglect of ALL religious worship, and a *uniform absence* from God's Sanctuary, scruple not to attack the vital parts of our religion — without offering even the melancholy substitute of *any thing* in the shape of compromise and palliation. One general, indiscriminate, irresistible destruction, would be pleasing, yea grateful, to some spirits, who associate with others more wicked than themselves — whose object and whose delight is to substitute evil for good, and darkness for light : who call sweet bitter, and bitter sweet.

You will not — nor I am sure will *any* set of Christians, accustomed to assemble in the Sanctuary of God—listen to counsel, or embark in a cause, which would level the temples of the Almighty with the dust of the earth : which would convert the tombs of your forefathers into desolate and abomin-

able places: which would leave you no outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace: which would equally bereave the cradle and the grave of all hope; and make our pilgrimage in this world darker even than the valley of the shadow of death. You, who have *not* so learned Christ, will, on the contrary, by frequenting the Sanctuary of God, not only understand "the end of these men," but hold up, to the admiration and imitation of every sincere Christian, the end of those, who, like yourselves, shall depart this life in the faith and fear of Christ, and for whom there is reserved in heaven a crown of glory which "never shall fade away."

SERMON II.

MATTH. xii. part of 45th verse.

*And the last state of that Man is worse than
the first.**

WHEN our Saviour wishes to convey an important truth to the minds of his hearers, he has sometimes recourse to parable: in order that, by a relation of supposed facts, the imagination may be more powerfully excited, and the lesson to be inculcated from it more forcibly impressed.

Thus, not to mention *all* the beautiful parables with which his discourses abound, we need only call to mind those of the Rich Man and Lazarus—the unjust and ungrateful Servant—the good Samaritan—and the narrative from which the text is taken — and which has formed the Gospel of the day—namely, that “when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places,

* Preached at St. Mary's, Jan. 18, 1824.

seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

God Almighty has, in his infinite goodness, planted within us, a quick, and, generally speaking, an unerring sense of vice and wickedness; so that no man can plead ignorance of crime when found guilty of its commission. No man is so foolish and extravagant to assert, that it requires long previous study and methodical initiation, in order to be acquainted with what is good and what is bad. Without scriptural revelation, we certainly know the one from the other. Virtue and Vice are so distinctly characterised, that, in the true language of the moralist, they require only to be seen to be beloved or detested.

Having, then, these (I had *almost* said innate) perceptions of what is virtuous and vicious in the moral world, there can be no colour of excuse for our deviation from the one, and our adoption of the other; especially when it is considered, that although our

uncultivated intellect may be weak, the precepts of education never fail to strengthen it by enforcing a rigid observance of integrity and morality .


We are launched therefore on the ocean of life, with principles that may save us from shipwreck, if we choose to pursue the proper track in the voyage. The Almighty expects fundamental principles of morality, before he vouchsafes to visit us with the consolations of religion. We may be assured that in a *first* state of sinfulness, these consolations cannot be enjoyed — much less in a state of relapse.

But what, you will say, can be the reason that men, who have tasted of the fruits of a virtuous and religious life, can return to their former sinful habits? If *virtue* and temperance be of themselves so excellent and profitable, why are they ever abandoned for profligacy and *vice*? And how, according to this mode of reasoning, is Virtue its own reward?

My brethren, this is the argument, and the sole cause of such conduct. Men return to vice and infamy without really and truly having known what virtue is. They find their passions so controlled, their pleasures

so curtailed, their sensual indulgences so restrained—that, uneasy under the rules and commands which virtue must necessarily prescribe, disgusted with the terms on which she alone promises to be their friend—they return precipitately to their former sinful ways, and their last state becomes worse than their first. Men, of this stamp, just know enough of virtue to find that she is a severe prohibitor of the indulgence of criminal passions and pleasures, but they have not the patience or the inclination to wait and enjoy the true, positive, substantial delights that flow from her presence.

Sometimes, however, the relapse into vice is protracted to such a period, that we are difficult to believe the truth when it is told us: for nothing is surely more strange and contemptible, than a character, far advanced in life, and hitherto in the enjoyment of an honest reputation, sliding backward into iniquity and woe. Perhaps a more afflicting, but awfully instructive object is not to be contemplated than that of a human being wavering on the confines of virtue and vice. So nicely is he balanced, so equally do the attractions operate, that, for a time, it is dubious on which side he intends to make



his choice. Here, the dignified form of Virtue appears with her crown of glory, which she tells him can only be worn after unwearied and unceasing toils to subdue carnal lusts. There, Vice, tricked out in her glittering and tinsel attire, scatters roses upon the path in which she urges him to walk — but carefully avoids to warn him of the serpent that lurks beneath the blossoms. The one elevates her eyes towards heaven, and seems absorbed in the contemplation of that bliss which she knows is to await her hereafter. The other lavishes her smiles and her praises on every object below, talks of endless pleasure, and of incalculable wealth.—On whom does the wavering mortal fix his choice? He fixes it on the *latter* — and then insults our understandings, — by asserting that he has known, *thoroughly* known, the former — and is disgusted with her insipid gratifications.

It is only from vain, fickle characters, without head and without heart, that we hear these shallow unmeaning descriptions of virtue. It is only from men who love to associate with spirits more wicked than themselves — reveling in their profligate principles, and exclaiming, “let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die”—it is only from characters of SUCH a cast

that we find vice extolled and virtue condemned.


If we all did but know a few instances of those returns to vice, which many a wretched mortal is doomed to undergo, we should soon be convinced of the horror and compunction which ensued. *Shame* has driven many to their former sinful practices. The ridicule of old companions has been irresistible; and so pliant are their wills and understandings, that the contemptible sarcasm of a fellow creature, has operated more powerfully than the express and awful commands of the Deity.

If, I say, we did but know a few of these returns to vice, how would our hearts melt within us? A disconsolate, abandoned, and insulted wife oftentimes pleads without pity—a numerous, helpless offspring have no claims to melt an obdurate and corrupt heart. Ruined circumstances, imprisonment, and the prospect of premature dissolution—are all sometimes set at defiance, when a favourite lust or darling passion is to be gratified. The remembrance of brighter and better days, creates not one single ray of virtuous reflection. Reputation has now no claim; and the last lingering spark of humanity is extin-

guished — and thus sallies forth many a monster, in the shape of a human being, to search for spirits even more wicked than himself: and infamy and punishment alone mark their last state, and stop their vicious career.

If however you could *suppose* that, on the near approach of premature death, (a punishment due to their crimes,) could such a prospect kindle one ray of reflection, what must be the sensations of such characters? what the agony and compunction which might goad them even to madness? The prospect of another world — the undertaking of that journey from whose bourne no traveller returns — the expectation of that sentence, ten thousand times more dreadful than the one they have recently received, and which is to consign them to endless torment — the family, the friends, the NAME they leave behind — all this, and much more, which it is impossible for me to conceive or describe, would harrow up their feelings to the most excruciating pitch of despair!

Let us, my brethren, from such a representation, which you must know not to be founded on fiction, learn to beware of a *repetition of crime* — of a *relapse* into a sinful course of life—for, depend upon it, our last state will be worse than the first.




Men do not become confirmed sinners in *a moment*. We are not made perfect in iniquity by one flagrant act. It is an *accumulation* of faults and errors, that first assume not the formidable appearance of crime, which gradually produces the hardened sinner. The progress from one error to another is so easy and rapid — the qualifications and apologies attending their commission are so readily made, that we become tainted with crime, before we think ourselves exposed to danger. We are precipitated into the very abyss of wickedness, when we imagine ourselves hardly advanced towards its brink.

But easy, or difficult and dreadful, as may be the entrance upon a vicious course of life, the *return to virtue* even is not quite so easy. Some there are who think that they can successfully pursue a sinful career, and atone for it at a *future period*, by a frank confession of their crimes, and a solemn promise to abstain from them hereafter. But this is trifling with virtue, with time, and with the Almighty. Such a one forgets that the longer he is familiarized with vice, the greater will be his difficulties in returning to virtue. He forgets, too, that his future period of repentance may *never arrive*: that his *to-morrow* may

be the commencement of *eternity* — and he also forgets that there is an Almighty Judge who hath ordained all things — whose decrees are as irresistible as they are wise — and that his soul may be required of him on the *eve of his repentance*—and THEN what will be his defence at the bar of omnipotence ?


Dangerous as may be even the *first* procrastination to return to good, it is certain that a *second* similar procrastination, after having relapsed into vice, is doubly difficult and dangerous. If all the sense of gratitude we can shew to our Almighty father for having graciously revisited us, and snatched us from the *first* perilous state of sin, be, a determination never again to partake of virtue, then are we lost and abandoned indeed ! Our ingratitude, perfidy, and contempt, deserve the severest punishment. We have voluntarily chosen “ to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, to stand in the way of sinners, and to sit in the seat of the scornful,” and we must abide by our choice. We have, in short, deserted the Captain of our Salvation, and enlisted ourselves under the banners of Satan. And what will be the consequences of this choice ?—consider it with a reference to this world and the world to come.



Here, we can expect no praise from the honourable and respectable part of society, no mercy or support from characters whose rank only equals their goodness. A stain and digrace are obliquely, but unjustly, thrown upon our relatives and connections. There is therefore no prospect here from which a finished delinquent can hope to receive sympathy and assistance — for his very family and friends may be among the first to shun and disown him.

But in reference to a *life to come*, how truly desperate and dreadful is such a case? I forbear however further to rouse your feelings by a description of its wretchedness and misery. The reflection of it ought, one would think, to arrest the arm of wickedness in its career, and to convert the profligate wretch to a state of comparative innocency and peace.

Nothing but the wiles of Satan could, one would suppose, drive SOME men to the desperate acts of madness and wickedness which they commit. Insanity not only claims, but receives our pity, when it is the effect of those inevitable and imperceptible causes which are interwoven in our frail natures — but, when it is the result of deliberate folly, predeter-



mined wickedness, and long continued crime — when we have been ourselves the voluntary and culpable instruments of its operation — when we have sought it in the midnight orgies of the sensualist — in the profligate luxuries of the spendthrift — and amidst the execrations and ravings of the gamester — in short, when we have associated with spirits even more wicked than ourselves — and when our last state, by these means, becomes lamentably worse than our first — then can we lay no claim to sympathy: then must our examples be shunned, and our memories execrated and forgotten by every son of virtue and religion. We have lived as reptiles in society, and we must expect to be trodden under foot.

In conclusion—that *such* things, and such characters exist, as well now, as in the times of our blessed Saviour, we want not even the evidence of *recent* experience to confirm: and it should seem, indeed, as if providence allowed the manifestation of its decrees, by the testimony of the unclean spirit — the agency of the Prince of darkness — *yet* taking possession of the minds and hearts of unprincipled and abandoned characters: ... for, in the contemplation of those events, or of that

experience to which I allude, it is impossible to account for facts and conduct on any other principle. When indeed men have shaken off, not only their allegiance to their Maker—but all respect for the ordinary rules and principles for the holding together of social order—when they have suffered the influence of a hardened heart and a reprobate mind to take full possession of them — when, in short, the agency of the Devil prompts and goads them on to the commission of every thing connected with the gratification of their lusts and passions — what *can* you expect as the *result* of such possession? Drunkenness, riot, gaming, robbery, murder: and these things, coolly and systematically concerted and carried into execution!

Doubtless, the virtuous heart and the well disciplined mind must revolt on a contemplation of such atrocities — committed by creatures, in the form, and with the properties, hopes, and responsibilities, of human beings; of heirs of immortality of objects of a Redeemer's mercy. But, never fail to consider, that all effects are only equal to their causes — and that these causes, it is in our power to shun or to embrace, just as our own sound reason or capricious impulses are given way to. If any one, hearing me, and understanding, as

I trust in God he does, the chain of this argument, feels, in his heart, not only an abhorrence of these enormities, but an astonishment how they could have occurred, I entreat him never to place himself within the vortex of such occurrences — either from a love of curiosity, or from a too confident reliance on his ability to resist the evil which may ensue. The mischief is, and the mischief doubtless has been, with those wretches to whom I allude*—and with the mention of whose wickedness our daily journals have so long and so disgustingly teemed — that they, at first, associated with spirits more wicked than themselves; that all the enormities which they may have committed were, at first, presented to them under a gilded and a treacherous aspect: that vice was called virtue, and virtue vice: that private and public prayer was equally ridiculed and scorned; and that the thoughtless and even unbounded expenditure of wealth, was to be supplied by *any* means however crooked, and by any conduct however atrocious.

What follows? — when the feelings are thus

* The murder of Weare had been then not long committed: the atrocity of which case was only equalled, in singularity, by the strange infatuation of general sympathy with the murderer.

frozen, the sensibility thus benumbed, the judgment thus perverted, and a sense of reverence and devotion towards the Most High thus extinguished — you cannot be surprised, however you may be shocked, at the train of bloody consequences which ensues. Grapes cannot be gathered from thorns, nor figs from thistles — and the duty of every sincere and enlightened christian will be, to redouble the guard (if I may so speak) upon his own conscience — and to pray, with tenfold earnestness, that he may be spared from being subjected to the like temptations, and thereby delivered from the like evils.

God is ever prompt not only to listen to, but to comfort and aid us in, our supplications to the throne of grace; and our duty should be, as well to return to virtue after we have lapsed into vice, as to keep all vicious pursuits at the greatest possible distance. The grossness and sinfulness of the human heart has indeed been sufficiently manifested on the occasion to which I allude — shewing us, thereby, the thinness of that partition which sometimes separates us from the mere common brutes of the earth.

If, on the one hand, and on the face of this

varied and beautiful globe, there be no criminal found (as some philosophers have imagined) more monstrous than MAN, so, on the other, there is no created being destined for higher excellencies, and capable of more exalted attainments — none, in whose life and death deeper interests are involved, and more exquisite misery or happiness dependant, than the same rational, but ever agitated and frail creature.

What then, as the conclusion of this exhortation, is our main duty, and are our best interests and hopes? Our main duty is this. While life is our own, let us devote it to the indulgence of pure and pious thoughts, and to the exercise of a virtuous, upright, beneficent conduct; always mistrusting our own unassisted endeavours, and always calling upon God, through the merits and mercies of his son Jesus Christ our Lord, to be our guardian and our guide—even in the valley of the shadow of death.

We have all a great and momentous task to accomplish; and short and uncertain is the period assigned for its accomplishment. The work of our salvation is to be wrought out with fear, distrust, and trembling; but

with hopes that will animate our hearts, and with encouragements and rewards, even in *this* world, which will give us an earnest, however inadequate, of the immensity of that happiness which await us beyond the grave.

SERMON III.

I. Timothy, ii. 5.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator
between God and Men—the Man Christ
Jesus.**

THERE are two points of view in which these emphatic words may be considered; in both, or in either of which, their import cannot fail to have the weightiest effect upon the minds of serious and conscientious Believers. First, they are the words of an experienced and eloquent teacher to the beloved pupil of his heart. Timothy, who was a native of Lystra in Lycaonia, is supposed to have been, together with his mother Eunice, converted by the preaching of St. Paul at Lystra : he was also an accomplished or well-educated young man—and, what was of more importance in the contemplation of his apostolical master, as well as towards the

* *Preached at St. Mary's, Jan. 25, 1824.*

future happiness of the converted pupil, his disposition partook of all the kindly feelings and exalted virtues of a Christian. His meekness, his obedience, his zeal, his unqualified readiness and submission to the spiritual guidance of St. Paul, rendered him a fit object, in the eyes of his preceptor, for the conversion of a portion of the Pagan or Gentile world ; and accordingly, after a close and constant attendance upon the great Apostle of the Gentiles—after receiving the ministry, or having hands laid on him in the Office of Ordination, not only by St. Paul, but by the Presbytery, or the inspired Apostles of that period—he was sent to preach to, if not to convert, the Ephesians. He was, in short, the Christian Bishop of Ephesus ; and is supposed to have suffered martyrdom in that city, not a long time after the death and martyrdom of his beloved master St. Paul.

Such was the Apostle's love towards Timothy—such the conviction of the virtues of his heart, as well as of the qualifications of his head—that he calls him, in the 2d verse of the 1st chapter of his first Epistle to him, his own son in the faith. “Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith—Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ

our Lord." Thus, there can be no question, on the one hand, of the sincerity of the Apostle's attachment to his pupil, nor, on the other, of the pupil's worthiness of the affections of his master. What follows, therefore? Why, with *such* a reciprocity of esteem and cordiality between them, it was impossible for St. Paul either to dissemble, or to impart such precepts or doctrines but those which he knew must be firmly and indelibly engraven on the basis or foundation stone of Christianity—for surely he never would have inculcated, with a favourite disciple, (about, in turn as it were, to become an Apostle from himself) principles, or doctrines, but such as he knew to bear the stamp of the Divine Original from which they emanated.

This is the first point of view, whereby the impressive words of my text cannot fail to have a serious effect upon the minds of conscientious believers. The second point of view is of a more comprehensive and solemn nature; inasmuch as it relates to the purport and tendency of the words themselves: delivered, doubtless, by one of the mightiest teachers of Christianity, to one of the most faithful and affectionate of his followers. In order, however, that its force and true mean-

ing may be exactly felt and appreciated, it will be necessary to read the context—or the preceding, and a small portion of the subsequent, matter.

The second Chapter itself opens thus: “ I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: who will have *all* men to *be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth — For (in the words of my text) there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” And then, in the immediately following verse, it is said “ who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time.”

From these verses, collectively, we gather as it were the apostolical scope or meaning of the particular verse of which the text is composed; and the first feeling, or impression made, is, the power, consistency, and distinctness, of the Being thus proffering salvation to sinful men: the *second* feeling, is, the universal applicability of the salvation

and redeeming mercies held forth by the Creator, and, at once, the Saviour of the world. "There is one God : one Mediator—the man Christ Jesus : who gave himself up a ransom for all—to be testified in due time." From the beginning to the end of this identical chapter, we discover the singular benevolence, warm-heartedness of feeling, consoling, encouraging, and revivifying assurances of the Great Apostle, its author. *All* men are to be prayed and interceded for. Hence, in the true spirit of apostolical feeling, in the impressive prayer in our Liturgy for "all sorts and conditions of men," we pray—"O God, the Creator and Preserver of *all* Mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men : that thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy *sav- ing* health unto *all* nations." This, you observe, is in perfect accordance with the enlightened views and truly christian-like principles of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles. Next, to cheer the hopes and strengthen the faith of his beloved pupil—and, through him, of the Ephesian converts,—and, as at this day, of the whole Christian world—St. Paul identifies the Power in whom is concentrated this saving Grace, this mighty salvation : namely,

the Man Christ Jesus—" who is one, and the *only*, mediator between God and Men."

This very illustration is the more encouraging ; for he, who is to save us, who is to bring us into the presence of the Almighty God and Father, lived once amongst us : took on him the infirmities of our flesh, and the failings of our nature, sin excepted : made his abode with us : ate and drank among Publicans and Sinners : wrought miracles for the conviction and conversion of hardened sinners : lastly, gave up his life for us, and died the death of a common malefactor on the cross. " He descended into Hell ; the third day he rose again from the dead : he ascended into heaven ; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." And what are the views and wishes of this divine Mediator, thus enthroned at the right hand of ineffable Majesty ?—that ALL mankind, by his atoning blood, may be redeemed ; " who gave himself up a *ransom* for *all*."

Sublime, mysterious, but most unerring, and unspeakably consoling doctrine ! What —for ALL ? for the unjust, as well as the just ? Yes—for we are all sinners :— but we are to be sorry, repentant, chastised, and in great measure regenerated, from a state of sinful-

ness, ere we can possibly hope to become participators of that ransom which is held out in the language of the Gospel. We are conceived and born in sin; but, by repentance, by a hearty contrition, by an earnest desire and entreaty for forgiveness, by calling on God to have "mercy upon us miserable sinners," we may, by a *life* led conformably to what such vows and entreaties imply, (bestirring ourselves actively and conscientiously, in this state of regeneration) cherish a rational hope, and put up a well-grounded prayer, that it may please the Almighty to admit us within the fold of the great Shepherd of Israel.

For those—who live on, and die fearlessly in sin—or for those, who only put up formal, pharisaical prayers, and do not shew forth the praise of their Redeemer in their lives as well as with their lips — to such, no enlightened Minister can, as I conceive, in the conscientious discharge of his pastoral functions, hold out promises of that ransom which the Apostle speaks of in his Epistle to his beloved Timothy.

But there is another point of view wherein I wish more particularly to consider the mediatory powers of the man Christ Jesus—

and it is this. There are those who believe, yea, who contend, that salvation is only of **PARTIAL** operation: that he, who died for all —by whose death the sins of the world lost their otherwise deadly sting of everlasting perdition—who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live — that this great, and merciful, and all-wise Redeemer, will shut out, from the pale of his flock in the kingdom of his Father, certain of those who, from the *beginning* were *ordained* to be irrevocably *lost*. Oh perverse, and to my humble apprehension, fallacious and monstrous conclusion! Yea, it is more—it hath in it that which chills the soul, darkens the intellect, cripples the mental energies, and renders void and worthless the noblest actions of the noblest of our fellow creatures! Where is the motive for good conduct, when I am told that all my goodness (taking it with its usual qualifications, in a scriptural point of view) that all my goodness availeth me no more than the timid, lax, and even immoral conduct, peradventure, of my neighbour?


How can I lay me down in peace, and take my rest—and pour forth my pious meditations, and hope to be forgiven through Jesus

Christ our Lord—when the benumbing influence of the ill-fated doctrine to which I allude, turns my pillow of repose into a couch of thorns — and fixes their very points in my heart ! Hath God created me for this ?—and have I so narrowed the broad and universal scheme of redemption, that I must forbid its operation with the wise and the good, unless I have secret assurances, a mystical faith and belief, that they too, even with the *reprobate*, may be sometimes saved ! Or again—as the moment of death, and thereby of a Christian's triumph, advances—as the meek spirit, guided through life by the gospel of Christ, sees that moment arrive, which is to close for ever all worldly prospects, all connections with life, with relations, friends, and possessions—in that anxious and perhaps agitated moment, such a Spirit confidently exclaims, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God :” — at that moment, would you close the flood-gates of mercy ?—and convert the refreshing streams of comfort into the waters of bitterness and woe ? Would you thus turn hope into despair, faith into doubt, and piety into distrac-

tion? And is the crisis, which is to afford an earnest of a blissful eternity, to be marked as one which dooms the sufferer to everlasting perdition! What infatuation, O man, hath blinded thy mental vision, and steeled thy susceptible heart! Look up to the heavens, and view the sun shining, or the shower falling, upon the just and the unjust: see how creation smiles with one general face, one genial glow, of beauty, fertility, and nourishment: and shall the hand that sowed the seed, not gather the harvest?

Shall the good and penitent not reap, by God's blessing, and through Christ's mercies, the harvest of their lives of faith and of hope, in the world which is to come? He who thinks, and reasons, and *acts* on such thought and reason, *differently*, doth, in my poor estimation, act in a manner to *add* to the otherwise *inevitable* sufferings of the lot of humanity.

My brethren, I am anxious, in conclusion, that on this, among my first Addresses from this place—and as a newly appointed *Pastor* among you — there should be a distinct and unequivocal declaration, that the principles, which have been just described, will form no part of the doctrine delivered by me in this



place; nor, as you have already heard, does it at all fall within my conception of the words of the text now predicated upon. It is sufficient for us all, struggling more or less in this vale of sorrow and tears, to encounter with manliness those evils which we cannot avoid, without adding to their poignancy from the suggestions of a wild fancy, or the impulses of an impetuous judgment. We are all born for trouble, as the sparks fly upward; but the religion of Christ Jesus teaches us to soften those troubles by a well grounded hope of happiness hereafter, — to bear up against them with a *fortitude*, which it is the exclusive province of his religion to impart.

Let this be the pillar of fire to illuminate us when we are tossed to and fro in darkness upon the stormy waves of this world. Let it not operate as a spectre to appal, but as a guardian angel to animate and to soothe: bearing in mind that God our Saviour (in the inspired language of the Apostle) will have *all* men to be *saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth—for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men—the Man Christ Jesus — who gave himself a ransom for ALL.

To him therefore, with the Father, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all might, majesty, power and dominion, now and for evermore.

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SERMON IV.

Psalm i. 1st and 2nd verses.

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful — but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**

THERE are few words in the book of Psalms more familiar to us than those just repeated. They stand in front of the Psalmist's congratulatory hymns to the Deity; because one would naturally suppose, the author of them was convinced that a right disposition, fit habits, and virtuous connexions, were absolutely essential for the proper understanding of the attributes of the Deity, and for a proper acknowledgment of the obligations which we are daily and hourly under to him.

One thing must forcibly strike us at the

* Preached at St. Mary's, Feb. 1 1824.

outset of our remarks. Here is an inspired writer, a monarch, too, of extraordinary splendor, and a human being who, from his merits, rose from the lowest to the highest station. — from a shepherd to a king : — here is an authority of this nature directly telling us, that without moral habits, and virtuous connections, and religious principles, we cannot possibly prosper in this world, nor be in a fit state of mind to hold intercourse with our Maker. This inference is, I presume, justly deducible from the opening of the book of Psalms. I shall therefore direct your attention, and more particularly that of the YOUNGER part of my congregation, to the immense importance attendant on an early choice of virtuous friends, and a regular fulfilment of religious and moral duties. These form the basis of all that is beautiful and amiable in the human character ; of all that is essential and most interesting in our relative situations with our parents and our friends, and our hopes of immortality beyond the grave. Without a strict and constant adherence to these great points, the human mind too frequently becomes absorbed in the lowest pursuits ; and the seeds of that mental purity and characteristic energy, which God hath sowed in our hearts to en-

able us to be a blessing and a comfort to all that are near and dear to us, produce fruits of the bitterest anguish, and of the deepest despair. Let us therefore attend to a subject so uncommonly interesting to our feelings, and so peculiarly applicable to that period and situation in life, when the faculties of the mind are beginning to dawn, and to have perceptions of what is right and wrong.

First, the sacred Psalmist says, "blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." — By this is meant, that doth not form his conduct according to the directions of unprincipled men — that doth not act as knaves and blasphemers would wish him to act.

YOUNG PEOPLE should not even listen to such counsel — for the mischief is, that *bad* folks assume as much importance in their deliberations as *good*: they impose upon young minds by the formality of their associations, and by the deliberative gravity with which their counsels are enacted: for Vice, to be successful, imitates Virtue as much as she is able. She puts on the outward garb, and wishes to wear the same external beauty, although, as our Saviour justly observes, it is only as a whitened sepulchre with filth and

putrefaction within. The first advice then that David gives, in the words of my text, is, not to walk in the counsel — not even to listen to the suggestions — of ungodly characters : and much more — as these suggestions are sometimes clothed in the most specious and hypocritical language — not to follow them after they are delivered : for rely upon it, infamy and ruin will be the result.

Do not therefore be obstinate, if a wise and virtuous parent tell you that you are entangled in the toils of the *wicked*, when you think that you are walking according to the suggestions of the *good*. How many young people, with the best of hearts and with the purest intentions, have blindly pursued their own destruction, when they have imagined that their happiness was only in view. And can there be a more bitter, a more heart-cutting consideration, than that of a parent *seeing* the child, and only hope of his bosom, pertinaciously walking according to the counsels of the ungodly ? Can a more distressing object present itself than that of an intellectual, and liberally minded young character, obstinately persevering in those pursuits which, if he would only look on his right hand or on his left, he would find have already brought

plaining of their evil habits, and with aching hearts lamenting their wretched course of life, but, at the same time, pertinaciously *hering* to it — so strongly does God permit our vile bodies to triumph over our mental faculties, when we have sacrificed to their every ridiculous whim, in every licentious wish, and in every unhallowed gratification. Wretched therefore, my brethren, beyond description wretched, is that man who embraces the very vice that he reprobates, and execrates the ruin which he spontaneously clings to.

This it is, to *stand in the way of sinners*; to associate with unprincipled and abandoned characters.

In the third place, we are enjoined by the royal Psalmist, “*not to sit in the seat of scornful.*” It has been justly observed, that men become disgusting in society, either in consequence of unprincipled associations with others, or of ridiculous and pernicious habits in themselves. By sitting in the seat of scornful, is meant, the arrogating to ourselves a superiority of judgment and conduct, which we have no reason to indulge either. Pride and superciliousness were never intended as ornaments to the human mind, nor were they ever displayed in the conduct of our Saviour.

nor can they form one single ingredient in the composition of a christian character. "Who art thou, O man," says St. Paul, "that judgest another?" and Christ tells us not to sit in judgment upon others, lest we ourselves be subjected to a weightier judgment in return. Unquestionably, if men do wrong, their actions are to be condemned; otherwise, vice and immorality would be let loose upon mankind, and the worst of consequences would ensue: — but when David tells us not to sit in the seat of the scornful, when our Saviour and St. Paul tell us not to judge one another, these injunctions mean that we are seriously, cautiously, and diffidently, to consider the thoughts and actions of men: and that we are not only to display, in our own conduct, a perfect *exemption* from the evil which we reprobate in others, but to weigh the actions of our fellow creatures in the balance of candour, and to pass judgment tempered with mercy. Nothing is more revolting to sensibility than a scornful character; and if YOUNG PEOPLE imagine that petulancy, anger, and disdain, form any thing like a necessary part of human accomplishments, they not only most grossly deceive themselves, but become in turn, a just object of scorn and derision to others.

We are now to consider the latter part of the words of my text which says that, "that man is blessed whose *delight is in the law of the Lord*; and who meditates thereupon day and night."

THESE are the characters who are blessed in the eyes of the Psalmist, and who are considered by him as fit beings to hold intercourse with their Maker: and with these characters, let us all, young and old, associate: To take delight in the law of the Lord, is to become acquainted with the principles of our religion, and to practise the precepts which it contains. No man can possibly take delight in that of which he is ignorant: it will therefore follow, that in proportion to the frequency and urgency of our instruction in religious truths, should be our delight in understanding them, and in illustrating them by the purity of our conduct. No young person, I am sure, in this congregation, can complain that he has been brought up *without* frequenting the temple of his God, and without being instructed in the word of his Redeemer. Let him therefore, assiduously, cultivate such a course of instructions, and he will reap the benefit of it abundantly. As soon as his reason has suggested the import-

ance of it, let him shew that he takes delight in the law of the Lord, by attending the regular duties of public worship, by private prayer, and by devoting some portion of his leisure time to a study of those doctrines on which his everlasting happiness depends. Young people are too often uninstructed even in those historical parts of scripture which would afford amusement as well as edification: because there is a notion which generally prevails, that scriptural information is only necessary to those whose future situation in life will be the exercise of the *ministerial functions*. Now, with the same reason it may be urged, that a knowledge of the history of our own country, or with the customs of antiquity, is only necessary to him who is professedly to be an *historian*, or an illustrator of ancient works—but surely, this reasoning is most fallacious and inconclusive. We have in our language, blessed be God, some of the ablest, and most perspicuous works, upon the evidences and histories of our religion; and it can certainly be no dereliction of our duty, whether young or old, to become in some degree acquainted with them—and to consider *this* part of education, at least, as essential as any thing connected with the histories of *pagan* countries.

How can we take delight in the law of the Lord, unless we know and comprehend it? and unless we attend to this in *youth*, we are not very apt to have recourse to it in our maturer years — for we are the creatures of habit, and seldom shake off our early feeling and associations.

Do not let it be supposed, as is sometimes the case, that these kind of studies derogate from the spirit of a generous character, or lead to notions and pursuits the reverse of what is compatible with the dignity and consequence of man. Those, who entertain such notions, forget that some of the wisest and some of the bravest characters that this, and other countries have produced, were not less eminent for their piety, than their wisdom and their valour. What is there in the law of the Lord that administers to *ignorance* or *pusillanimity*? Nay, who was more pious, yet who more distinguished for his valour and patriotism — who more celebrated for the beauty and sublimity of some of his writings — than the SACRED PSALMIST, whose words have formed the subject matter of this discourse?

Away then with every contracted and narrow notion respecting the delight which is to be taken in the law of the Lord!

If, in conclusion, you wish, my *Young Brethren*, to be blessed with the blessing of God Almighty, take delight in his law : meditate thereupon day and night — in other words, offer up to the Author of your Being, and of every good and perfect gift to man, — offer up the morning and evening sacrifice of *prayer* and *thanksgiving*. If you are without parents, God will be your parent. You may open your inmost soul to him, and he will heal your wounded spirit, and make whole your broken heart. Approach him, for he is the father of all ! Take delight in his law, for in observing of his statutes there is an exceeding great reward. Mercy and justice — truth and righteousness — are his attributes ; and these shall be the Ministers which he will send to protect your goings out and coming in — to sanctify your orisons — and to guard you in the otherwise unprotected slumber of the night. Fear not, for he is Almighty ; doubt not, for he is all watchful and all faithful ; faint not, for he is the fountain of light and of life ; despair not, for his mercy endureth for ever !

If, as will most probably be the case, you shall see your parents go down to the grave before you yourselves become the victim of

the king of terrors, weep over their bodies with a decent and pious sorrow ; and solace yourselves that, by faith and hope in Christ, you will one day meet—never to part again ! Or if prosperity should bless you in their declining circumstances, as well as decaying years, never, oh ! never leave them unprotected ; but anticipate all their wishes, and administer consolation to all their wants and infirmities ! They have borne and brought you up ; they have watched over the helpless years and casualties of your infancy ; and the law of God teaches them to expect, in return, all your support, and all your affectionate gratitude !

Finally, shun the counsel of the ungodly ; shun the way of sinners — shun the seat of the scornful — cultivate, on the contrary, every moral, every amiable, every virtuous *pursuit*, and this must necessarily secure to you virtuous *connections*. Do not let the mockeries of the licentious, or the slanders of the revengeful, ever make you deviate one step from persevering in such a career.

Recollect, again and again, that the great business of life, is a *preparation for death* ; and that we are not to seek for momentary gratifications — we are not to cling to worldly customs and considerations — we are not to

pant and toil after those things which afford mere temporary gratification, — but, on the contrary, for those things which will be able to give us, in the expiring moments of mortality, PEACE AT LAST!

SERMON V.

St. Matth. xviii. 35th verse.

*So likewise shall my heavenly Father do a
unto you, if ye, from your hearts, forg
not every one his brother their trespass*

WHOEVER has been accustomed to re-
attentively, or to meditate seriously up-
the parables of our blessed Saviour, can
fail to have discovered in them a wonder-
felicity — both in the adaptation of the sub-
ject matter to the characters of his auditors
and in the peculiarly simple, yet most app-
ropriate, and even forcible language, in which
that subject matter is conveyed. The most
sentiment, or principle, developed in
these parables, is not less, also, deserving
your attention and meditation. To the Pag-
world in particular—devoted to their partial
and distorted views of human nature —

* Preached at St. Mary's, Feb. 25, 1924.

their prejudiced and perverted feelings, and short sighted deductions — the delivery of such moral, or principle, could not fail to have been equally new, convincing, and astonishing.

Throughout all these parables, my brethren, there is such an acute knowledge of human nature displayed — clothed in language the most simple and forcible, yet destitute of personal offence — there is such an intimate and thorough acquaintance with the perversities of the human mind — yet with all its capabilities of apprehension and of improvement — that however the auditors, to whom such parables were addressed, might not, in the first instance, have assented to positions, or acquiesced in conclusions — upon retirement and reflection, and upon “communing with their own hearts,” they must have admitted that, surely “never man spake as this man spake ; truly this man was the Son of God.”

Your recollection of the parable, connected with the words of my text, will immediately convince you of the truth of these preliminary observations : that parable, containing one of the most luminous, argumentative, and irresistibly conclusive, illustrations of the

great Christian doctrine of forgiveness of injuries—of that doctrine, which our blessed Lord hath interwoven in his incomparable prayer—“forgive us *our* trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us”—and of which, indeed, it may be considered as an especial illustration.

You will observe, first, that the parable here alluded to, seems to have been delivered in consequence of an abrupt, but zealous, interposition on the part of St. Peter, to whom indeed, personally, our Lord might have spoken—while his auditors were the immediately surrounding spectators. “Then came Peter to him, and said, ‘Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?’”—that is, in *general* terms; for the *usual* acceptance, or sense of the word, *brother*, is not here meant to be conveyed—but only that of a fellow creature, or any one of the Apostles’ brethren. Observe again, that St. Peter, somewhat ungraciously, does not wait to receive the opinion of his Master—of the great Judge, to whose decision he had pointedly deferred—but he goes on to give his *own notion* of the extent of forgiveness of injuries—and, in proportion, to betray the narrow mindedness of his conceptions. He

adds—"till seven times?"—"must I forgive my brother as many as *seven* times, if he offend, or sin against me?" Our Saviour's reply is an admirable confirmation of the remark submitted to you at the opening of this Discourse. It is a reply at once general and particular—sententious and illustrative: for, first, our Lord says, "I say not unto thee until seven times—but until *seventy times seven*." This was his first general, but sententious, reply: an aphorism, or truth, dropping from his lips: and be assured it was accompanied with every mark of dignity, and perhaps with some little severity of rebuke. "What!"—might our Saviour have been supposed to remark, addressing himself partly to St. Peter—"do *you*, one of my most zealous followers and disciples—one, who hath so often heard my doctrines, and rejoiced in their consoling efficacy—do *you* confine your notions of forgiveness of injuries only until *seven times*?!—I say not unto thee"—(repeating St. Peter's own words, and thus adding greater power to the reply) "until seven times—but until *seventy times seven*."

Immediately, therefore, our Saviour subjoins the parable of the king who would take

account of his servants; typifying, in such king, his own Father, which was in heaven—and who at the last day will, in like manner, take an account of us—his creatures, his servants, and his debtors.

In order to make the parable more forcible, and to shew in a more striking manner the tender mercies of his Father, and the enormities of our offences, the first servant, who is brought before the King, appears to have been a very considerable delinquent—his deficiencies or debts amounting to no less a sum than 10,000 talents: and he declares himself wholly unable to satisfy his sovereign Master. In consequence, an order is given to seize upon every thing in the shape of compensation — he is himself, in the first instance, commanded to be sold—then his wife and children are to be seized upon for the same object—and all that he possesses—and payment to be made. You see, my brethren, the Judge is at first inexorable: the Sovereign's sway is not to be questioned or controled — and the ministers of justice seize upon the hapless victim of delinquency. What follows? The man has only *one* resource left—the having recourse to the tender, compassionate feelings, which he knew

his Maker had implanted in the human breast. Mercy—mercy and forgiveness—are now the only remaining, and perhaps, as he thought, *desperate* and forlorn resources to fly to. He falls therefore prostrate before his Sovereign and Creditor: he worships him, saying, in the agony of his soul, “ Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” The delinquent had conjectured wisely: the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

What kind-heartedness — what magnanimity, even, was here displayed! The wretched debtor — just trembling with the apprehension of perpetual slavery—just agonised with horror at the prospect of parting for ever from the wife and children of his bosom—just, in short, upon the very brink of perdition and despair—is, in an instant, and without any possibility of expectation on his part, raised from the earth; released from bondage; restored to his wife and family; and rendered, as he *ought* to have thought himself, happy for the remainder of his days.

But now I must, following the sequel of the parable, conduct you to a more painful and heart-distressing sight. I must place before you, borrowing the materials furnished

by the divine original, a picture of the littleness, the turpitude, and malignity of human nature : a picture, as true in its delineation, as it is striking and repulsive upon contemplation. The released debtor, equally forgetting the extent of his own delinquency, and the unparalleled mercy of his Creditor, leaves the royal presence—abashed, and perhaps penitent : but upon retiring he happens to meet with a fellow servant, who, instead of owing him 10,000 talents, as he had owed his royal Master, is indebted to him in the mere trifling sum of—100 pence.

Without the least expostulation or enquiry, this hardened creditor, in turn, seizes upon the wretched and unprepared debtor : lays violent hands upon him — takes him by the throat — saying, “ pay me that thou owest ! ” We are now about, on the one hand, to see the same scene acted as before ; but, on the other, to view a most decided and melancholy different *result*. This poor debtor—thus seized upon unawares—falls down at the very feet of the man — his equal and fellow servant—who, a few minutes before, had been prostrate in trembling apprehension before his Master to whom he had owed the enormous sum of 10,000 talents ! The suppliant there-

fore is now. in turn, the judge — and a most fierce and inflexible judge does he shew himself to be : for he is unmoved by his fellow servant's cries and entreaties : he will have no patience with him, but casts him into prison till he should pay the debt. The miscreant has neither compunction, nor gratitude, nor mercy, nor any remembrance of the forgiveness which had been just exercised towards himself. The debt, though trivial and contemptible in comparison with his own, is not forgiven : the debtor is cast into prison ; and the wretch, thus abusing the character he had assumed, is inexorable to all application for mercy. Ah, my brethren ! let us ask our own hearts whether, in this picture, we find no traces of resemblance to ourselves. Let us enquire diligently and scrupulously whether we have not frequently refused that mercy, that kindness, that forgiveness to *others*, which, so fresh in our memories, have been dealt out to us. But these reflections will engage us in the sequel. At present we will resume the illustration of the parable. The triumph of this base servant, and most unjust judge, is but short-lived. His fellow servants, who had been spectators of such atrocious conduct, naturally, in the fulness of

their indignation, (and to vent the sorrow which they could not but have felt) came, and told unto their Lord all that was done. We may easily, I think, anticipate the result. The Judge of *mercy*, is now converted into a Judge of *jealousy* and *justice*. The exhibition of those feelings which formerly possessed him, would now have become censurable; indeed it was impossible: for with the same measure that the delinquent had meted out to his fellow servant, was he in turn to have justice — retributive justice — meted out to himself withal.

For the *second* time, therefore, is the delinquent brought before his Sovereign creditor. But how fares it with him *now*? He could not — he dared not — have met the searching eye of his offended Sovereign: knowing but too well that every avenue to mercy, pity, and compassion, was shut up — impenetrably — to every attempt, however persevering.

He comes therefore reluctantly, slowly, tremblingly—as a culprit—to stand before his judge. No more appeals to patience, compassion, and forgiveness. He dare not, he could not, have hoped for the remission of his offence. He is mute and downcast:

while he receives, without any previous interrogatory, that judgment which he could not but have anticipated in his heart: a judgment, however, rendered more poignant to himself, and more impressive to the bystanders, by the emphatic address by which it is preceded. "O thou wicked servant"—said his Lord to him, after he had called him—"O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt—great as it undoubtedly was, and inconvenient to myself as the not discharging of it might have been—because thou desiredst me: because thou seemedst to be struck with wretchedness and despair—and because the slavery of thyself, and the selling of thy wife and children, must have attended the exaction of the debt—yet—remember—I forgave thee all: thou wert free, because thou desiredst freedom. Shouldest not thou also—I put it to thy common sense, common feeling, and conscience—shouldest not thou also, I say, have had compassion on thy fellow servant—even as I had pity on thee? If I forgave thee the 10,000 talents, shouldest not thou have forgiven the comparatively trifling debt of 100 pence?"

The convicted wretch says not a word in

reply. Every syllable proceeding from the lips of his Judge, he knows to be the language of irrefragable truth. He is silent, and retires—but not till he has been delivered to the tormentors; till he should pay all that was due unto him, his Master and Creditor. In other words, he is to be inexorably debarred the privilege of personal freedom, till his just debt be discharged.

Thus ends the parable: our Saviour adding, in the words of the text, “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother, their trespasses.” Throughout the whole of this illustration, we cannot have failed to observe that this parable carries, in every line and sentence of it, its own forceful commentary: the great Christian truth, deducible from it, being the constant and hearty FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

The first step to the forgiveness of injuries in *others*, is the importance, and necessity, of the conviction, that *we ourselves* stand in need of the same forgiveness—and that our own trespasses are to be pardoned, only in proportion “as we forgive them that trespass against us.” There is not a creature that breathes the breath of life—that has the use

of reason—and the free exercise of his mental faculties, but must, upon looking into his own heart, admit, not only his proneness to, but its commission of, error and crime, in its neglect of many serious and sacred duties; its hankerings after forbidden gratifications; its rancours, its burnings, its base and groundless jealousies; its asperities, and love of power and dominion. In consequence, we seek our heavenly Father in prayer and supplication: we confess our unworthiness: our sin is ever before us: and the Almighty, thus intreated, vouchsafes to pardon and blot out the registry of our misdeeds and infirmities. We rise upon the knees of piety, and from prostration in prayer, to mingle with our fellow creatures. The morning shines even with a purer lustre, in consequence of the sincerity of our devotions: we are alert, impatient to do good. A fellow creature, and a debtor—of some hundred pence—meets us. In an instant the glow of piety is chilled; the recollection of spiritual comfort received, is forgotten: anger, wrath, impatience, hardness of heart, possess us: “pay me that thou owest”—is the *first* exclamation—whether or not accompanied with personal violence.

This fellow creature falls down at our feet

—intreats our patience — implores our forgiveness—or demands only a little time for the liquidation of his trifling debt : but, in the language of Scripture, “ we will not :” and cast him into prison till he shall *pay* the debt. Where now, wretched man, is the earnestness of your devotion, and the sincerity of your repentance? where the recollection of your vows, and the performance of your promises? God has forgiven you — his son, Jesus Christ our Lord, has vouchsafed to listen to your trembling prayers — to soothe the perturbations of your mind—to ease the throbbings of your heart. And is all this heavenly succour and consolation so soon shaken off, so easily forgotten, so systematically set at nought!! Yes—there is the base alloy of human nature yet lurking within you; contaminating all your higher faculties, and enfeebling all your nobler resolves. In short, you have either not prayed sincerely, and from the inmost recesses of the soul—or, having so prayed, you are unworthy of the comfort which such prostration ought to impart : the body of this death yet holds dominion in *you*, as it did in *St. Paul*. My brethren, this may be figuratively speaking, but it is an illustration, at once general and

just, of what is daily passing before our eyes. In some way or other, there is not an hour that glides by, but what may be advantageously employed in soothing the irritabilities, and tempering the judgments of *others*, however we may be *ourselves* exempted from similar infirmities. This correction of human frailties, this scrutiny into our own hearts, this exercise of a merciful and forgiving temper, is the basis (I had almost said) of every Christian virtue: for it implies penitence and contrition in *ourselves*, and it tends to produce the same salutary effects in *others*. And if we suppose all mankind to be operated upon by such principles, it is impossible not to suppose but that this world — instead of viewing it, as we now view, the scene of endless contentions, bickerings, asperities, vindictive resentments, and unavoidably severe punishments—would wear the face of general joy, confidence, tranquillity, and happiness.

“ Be *ye* therefore merciful, as your FATHER also is merciful ;” remembering that, “ if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” In the eye of Omnipotence, we are ALL debtors and all trespassers ; and we must prepare to meet our Judge hereafter, as we have in a very great

measure performed the offices of *judges* and *creditors*, as well as repentant sinners : as we have *not* returned “ evil for evil, but, contrariwise, blessing.”

There are few things, I am well persuaded, which will render our pilgrimage through this harassing and trying scene below, more cheering and prosperous ; and our preparation for *hereafter* more perfect and consoling : carrying with us, to our death-beds—deeply engraven upon our memories — *what it is* that the Almighty requires of us : “ the exercise of justice, the loving of mercy, and the walking humbly before our God.”

SERMON VI.

1 PETER, v. 6th verse.

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.**

IT is the distinguished characteristic of an enlightened community, believing in the efficacy of christian revelation, that, in all seasons of humiliation and repentance, it submits itself, readily and unfeignedly, to the disposal of an Almighty and all gracious Power.

Everywhere, in the holy scriptures, we see maxims of resignation and of submission inculcated. In their public as well as private capacities, our forefathers were told to surrender all their cares, sorrows, and anxieties, into *his* hands, who loved them with a parent's affection, and without whose permission not a hair of their heads might perish. Our blessed Saviour himself, by the unblemished tenor of his life, confirmed the import-

* Preached on Ash Wednesday, March 1824.

ance and the value of such precept and example. It should seem, as if, even to *his* exalted mind, and refined and perfectly disciplined feelings, occasional abstraction, prayer, fasting, humility, prostration of heart and spirit, were requisite for the important object of his mission — and by way of example to those who, *without* such abasement of mind and devotional spirit, might be entangled and lost in the briars and thorns of a treacherous world, and thus shut out from entrance into the mansions of everlasting blessedness.

It has been therefore, from a deep sense of the importance and necessity of this abstraction, by penitence, fasting, and prayer, that all the christian churches have set apart this solemn season—“to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, that they may be exalted in due time: casting (as the Apostle immediately adds) all our care upon *him*, for he careth for us.”

This, alone, is doubtless a great inducement or encouragement for us so to rend our hearts and not our garments: and to turn unto the Lord our God, who is gracious, merciful, and disposed abundantly to pardon penitent and humble sinners. But these general principles, strengthened by the great

example of our Saviour, need not be further enforced; and I come therefore more immediately to the particular and sacred business of the day. First, as to its antiquity. From the earliest ages of christianity, it was customary for the Christians to set apart some time for mortification and self-denial, to prepare themselves for the feast of Easter. The christian Lent probably took its rise from the Jewish preparation for their yearly expiation. The Jews began their solemn humiliation before the days appointed for this expiation. Wherefore (says one of our most able commentators upon the Liturgy) the primitive Christians, following their example, set up this fast at the beginning of christianity, as a proper preparative for the commemoration of the great expiation of the sins of the whole world, by the passion, suffering, death, and resurrection of the Saviour, Christ Jesus. The word "*Lent*" is allowed to be only an old English, or Saxon word, synonymous with *Spring*: but it is now, and has long been introduced and established in our church as synonymous with the *Spring fast*: which always begins, so that it may end at Easter, to remind us of our Saviour's sufferings, which ended with his resurrection.

calculated to promote the glory of God, by forwarding the salvation of man, it is *this* appointment of a certain *set time* for all persons to consider their ways, to break off their sins, and to return from whence they are fallen through the infirmities of the flesh and the prevalence of temptation. For though most certain it is, that sorrow should be the constant attendant upon sin, and daily transgressions call for daily penitence — yet fatal experience convinces us of another truth, no less certain — that, in a body so frail, and a world so corrupt, cares and pleasures soon oppress the heart, and insensibility brings on the slumber of listlessness and negligence as to its spiritual concerns, which, unless dissipated and dispersed by frequently repeated admonitions, will at length seal it up in the deep sleep of a final impenitence.”

“ It was wisely foreseen, that, should the sinner be permitted to reserve for *himself* the *choice* of a convenient season, wherein to turn from sin to righteousness, that “ convenient season ” might never arrive ; and the specious plea of keeping every day holy *alike*, would be often found to cover a design of keeping none holy at all. It seemed good therefore to the church, to fix a stated time, in which

men might enter upon the great work of repentance ; and what time could have been selected with greater propriety, than this "Lenten" or Spring season, when universal nature, awakening from her wintry sleep, and coming out of a comparative state of death and deformity, is about to put on her garments of glory and beauty to give us a kind of prelude to the renovation of all things ? — so that the whole creation most harmoniously accompanieth the voice of the church, as that which sweetly accordeth to the call of the apostle, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Thus much this eminent Prelate.

In the third place, you cannot have failed to notice, how these great objects are promoted or accelerated by an attention to the particular service set apart for this day's commemoration: that is to say, having the great sins and heinous offences pointed out to us, of which, if we are guilty, we cannot flatter ourselves with the hope of acceptance with the Deity — and which was, from a positive and divine institution, twice enjoined by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, and afterwards confirmed and observed by Joshua

himself. Nor let any one suppose that the repetition of *Amen*, is, as it were, an *indirect* bringing down of a curse upon *ourselves*: for be it considered, first, that God commanded this very manner of answering; so that it can be no less than *blasphemy* to call it wicked or foolish: nor can *they* show less ignorance than impiety who affirm this “Amen” to be a wishing of *ourselves accursed*; for the word, in this situation, is merely an affirmation of a truth; namely, that *he*, who curses his father and mother — and so through the nine sentences, — is accursed, condemned, criminal, reprehensible, before his Maker and Saviour; and if we believe this with our hearts, when we say it with our lips, it will show us our danger, — check us from running into like crimes, and committing similar sins — and, in consequence, bring us to a repentance deep, sincere, and working for our eternal welfare. The concluding portion of the service of this solemn day, cannot, I am persuaded, my brethren, have failed to make a sensible impression on your hearts; and I am also equally persuaded, that if the whole of the service be occasionally read in your own chambers, still, and apart from all worldly intrusions, it will greatly help to bring

about that frame of mind and of body, befitting a season so peculiarly set apart for meditation and communing with our own hearts. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

Fourthly, and in the last place, with respect to the *peculiar character* of our penance. You must not fail to bear in mind, that, in proportion to the excitements to devotion on the *one* hand, are the inducements to worldly dissipation on the other. Lent, is not, and cannot in the nature of things, be, at this period of the world, and with the enlightened present state of christianity, a season of unsociable, gloomy, and self-mortifying retirement, from its commencement to its close. Neither the laws of God, nor the ordinances of man, enjoin this measure; but if you are exhorted to avoid the monastic gloom and ascetic severity of one denomination of Christians, do not run into the capricious, irrational, and fearful extremes of another: let there be temperance in your fastings, and let there be temperance in your enjoyments. The one doth not vitiate the other: they are *both* in perfect unison with the habits, dispositions, and characters of

that denomination of good, pious, and virtuous men, who have long been the glory of our church — whose memories will be for ever dear to after ages — and who, not less by their lives than with their lips, have worked out their *own*, and enabled others to work out *their* salvation, with fear and trembling. Blessed be the memories of such truly excellent and exemplary characters! who have taught us that religion is not less winning and efficacious from the *social* virtues which she enjoins, than from the everlasting interests which she holds out to the pious and well disposed: to the works of love, growing up and abounding from the seeds of faith, hope, and charity.

What then, in conclusion, is the sum and substance of these remarks? It is this; do not let your fasting, like that of the Pharisee, consist only of a sad countenance, that you may appear to men to fast, while God knoweth that it is a mockery and a jest: a mere mask of hypocrisy, put on to conceal the deformities of unsettled and unholy principles: but when *you* fast, and pray, and are penitent, retire within yourself, within your own soul: and the Almighty, who seeth in secret, will openly and abundantly reward.

God knows, in the course of this season, what cause we may have — heavy, severe, and inevitable — of humbling ourselves under his mighty hand: what disappointments, from within or from without, whereby our souls may be troubled, our brightest prospects dimmed, our fondest hopes and expectations levelled with the dust. The period of life is, with *some*, almost *always* a period of trial, temptation, and suffering. These have tasted of *nothing* but the cup of affliction; and the sunshine of prosperity and happiness has, comparatively, rarely visited or warmed their hearts. *Such* want no exhortation from the ministers of the gospel, *now* to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God: their whole lives are a season of abasement: their whole prayers, the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart: of a spirit, broken and bowed down to the earth in sackcloth and ashes. These are waiting with joy for the moment which is to disencumber them of this load of mortality, and when in their flesh they shall see God.

But there are others — there is the larger part of mankind — not so visited; not so desolate and oppressed; and therefore under the greater necessity of being warned, by

seasons and periods set apart for penitence and self-examination, that their lives are holden under a tenure, of which they cannot, with certainty, calculate upon a single day's possession : their riches, their revelries, their lands, their houses, their possessions, vanish like the morning mist.

To *such*, God grant that the present and all similar seasons of occasional abstraction and prayer, may be seasons, not only of warning, but of reformation and regeneration. An eternity of never fading bliss is surely cheaply purchased by the observance of *a few such* seasons : and while the gospel of Christ neither encourages nor inculcates that gloomy and splenetic seclusion, which prevents us from mingling cheerfully with our fellow creatures, for mutual comfort and happiness, so also doth it tell us, that if we live the *slaves* to this world's caprices and follies, we shall find ourselves setting out on the great road of eternity, without oil to our lamps, and without a Saviour to befriend us in the hour of darkness and dismay.

SERMON VII.

Matth. xxvi. latter part of 39th verse.

*If it be possible, let this cup pass from me—
nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou
wilt.**

THERE are few occurrences in the New Testament which create in us a more lively interest than the conduct of our blessed Saviour in the garden at Gethsemane: and there is, perhaps, no precept which more strongly urges us to an entire resignation to the will of heaven, than the one which has been just pronounced. When we consider by whom it was uttered, and the emergency of the occasion which caused its utterance, we shall not deny that it forms a subject of a serious and interesting nature: well deserving of the preacher's exposition, and of the hearer's profound attention. Let us all, therefore, by God's blessing, strive to benefit by the

* Preached at St. Mary's, March 14, 1824.

illustration, imperfect as it may be, which is about to be made.

The prayer of our blessed Redeemer on the night of the Passover, previous to his sufferings on the cross, has many circumstances attending it of an extraordinary and affecting nature: and it may be observed, what has not been noticed by many commentators, that the spirits of our Saviour were probably much depressed: and that he must, in consequence, have been less fitted for the severe trial of his agony, from having recently partaken, for the last time, of the Passover with his beloved disciples. The solemnity of that feast, the pathetic manner in which the Evangelist describes its participation, and the sorrow and anguish which seem to have possessed the disciples, as well as their amazement and perturbation on being told that some one of them should betray their Master — all this might have sensibly affected the benevolent bosom of our Saviour. Of that sacred and solemn feast, the food of which was probably moistened with the tears of the guests, the Evangelists have given us a concise but touching account; and as I presume the far greater part of us present have occasionally, if not frequently, been duly

impressed with its solemnity and importance, when prostrate, as on this very day we are called upon to be, before the ALTAR of our holy communion, the recital of it may be here passed over. It is sufficient however to observe, that the circumstances attending the participation of this ceremony must have severely and visibly affected our Saviour when he poured forth his soul in agony before his Almighty Father.

I purpose, in this discourse, first, shortly describing to you the events attending this agony; then making some observations on the meaning and force of our Saviour's prayer, as well as suggesting the probable cause, or causes, which may have contributed to his extreme perturbation of mind; and lastly, drawing from the whole such inferences as may be *strictly applicable* to us in our journey through this precarious state of existence to the haven of happiness and rest.

First, The events attending our Saviour's agony in the garden at Gethsemane, are briefly these. After he had partaken, as has been before alluded to, of the Passover with his disciples, he arrived with them at Gethsemane. He was now about to perform the last act of earthly adoration to his Father—

he saw the struggle which awaited him, and he was willing to make *those* only privy to such a scene, who had not only been his early and most ardent followers, but who had witnessed his transfiguration, and had, therefore, a sort of claim over the others to be spectators of the impending trial. "And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death—tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face—and prayed, saying—O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me—nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto his disciples, and findeth them fast asleep, and saith unto Peter — What, could ye not watch with me one hour!" After exhorting them to watch and pray, lest they entered into temptation, "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done! And he left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." Such is the account of St. Matthew: but the Evangelist St. Luke has related some addi-

tional circumstances, which, it must be confessed, serve to impress us with still more reverence, awe, and commiseration. He says, there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. But his former feelings returned — “ And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly — and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground ! ” Such were the events attending his agony. Let us now dwell on the prayer he preferred.

When he said, “ O my Father, if it be possible ! ” he meant, not, in the nature of the thing, for he declared “ All things were possible to his Father ” — but, according to his decree and the divine wisdom — whether *that* saw any other way by which his glory, and the salvation of men might equally be consulted ? If it did, then he begged the cup might pass from him. We find that our Saviour prayed thrice — saying the same words — the import of which seems to be to this effect : “ though the condition of human nature prompts me to desire freedom from this bitter cup, yet seeing I had a body prepared for me — that, being obedient in it to the death, I might do thy will, O God ! — I submit my natural, to thy divine, will.”

The term "cup," which is a figurative expression, abounding in ancient writers, alludes, in the instance of our Saviour, to his *present* agony and *approaching crucifixion*. It might be thought, as it was determined from the beginning for Jesus to suffer death, and he had often mentioned this appointment with acquiescence, that to be delivered from his *conflict* and *apprehension of mind*, previous to his death, was intended by the Evangelist—but St. John correctly ascertains the sense here given: "Now is my soul troubled—and what shall I say? Father, *save* me from this hour? But, for this reason *came* I to this hour."

The latter part of our Saviour's ejaculation needs little explanation. It speaks for itself. "Not mine, but thy will be done." Thus, after a variety of conflicting passions, perfect resignation triumphed in the end. He gave himself up, resolved to undergo all the ignominy and cruelty which awaited him, since it was the supreme will of his Father: and that we, sinful and too often ungrateful creatures, might be benefitted by such excruciating sufferings, and be cleansed from our impurities by the shedding of his precious blood.

Let us next proceed, in the second place,



to dwell a little on the cause, or causes, which might have produced such extraordinary sensations in the frame of body as well as of mind of our blessed Saviour. We should attend to this part of the subject, because infidel writers would insinuate that Jesus Christ forfeited all claims to divinity, by betraying such timid marks of conduct as a man. Five causes have been, and perhaps many more might justly be, assigned for this extraordinary affection. 1stly, A contemplation of the future sufferings of his beloved disciples. 2ndly, The apprehension of the acute bodily pain he was about to undergo. 3rdly, A prophetic view of the burning of the Temple, the devastation of the city of Jerusalem, and the destruction that awaited the Jews, and his native country. 4thly, A severe contention with the powers of darkness which were permitted at that time to assail him. Or, 5thly, A contemplation of the hardships, sufferings, and martyrdoms of those, who were to uphold and propagate that glorious religion which was to be sealed with his blood.

Whether *any one* of these causes, more powerfully than another, or whether the whole of them, *collectively*, operated upon our Saviour, it is probably beyond our capa-

cities to determine. That the cause, or causes, must have been wonderfully great, to have produced this effect—and of such a nature as no human being before, or since hath experienced—or in future can experience—and, consequently, that all conclusions drawn from our Saviour's agony which tend to lessen him in our reverence and adoration must be both nugatory and profane—seems obvious and unquestionable.

We now come, in the third place, to the important and striking lesson of humility and resignation which the conduct of our Saviour dictates to mankind. What a conflict is here exhibited between the love of life, and the desire of obedience to the will of God! How few, alas! know their own fortitude before the day of trial! How many of us who think so highly of our own strength and magnanimity, would fall off from our pretensions in the crisis of danger; and, like the too presumptuous disciple, deny and abandon our Master.

In our blessed Saviour we have, indeed, an illustrious example of complacency and resignation to the will of heaven. How ought we therefore to be ashamed of our frequent murmurings at the trifling and con-

temptible objects which are wont to agitate our passions, drive away our prudence, and our recollection of a subserviency to the divine will! At what poor and insignificant incidents are we apt to arraign the justice of Providence, and to censure the (supposed) infelicity of our lot! Though the bright sun of revelation never ceases to shine over our heads, yet a contemplation of it never induces us to be grateful, and warm in our professions of thanksgiving. Though the Saviour of mankind, our Lord and Master, submitted without a murmur to the dreadful death of crucifixion—he, who, if he had pleased, might have commanded the legions of heaven to dissipate and destroy his foes, but on the contrary even prayed for his murderers—yet we, weak and perishable mortals, can scarcely be reconciled to disappointment in the most trivial occurrences of life! Does such a conduct, my brethren, evince much credit to us as men, or display our legitimate characters as Christians? The more we read and meditate on this portion of the divine Scriptures—the more we seriously and minutely examine this part of our blessed Saviour's character—the more, I fear, will be

our surprise and shame at having so undeservingly appreciated it.

The exclamation of our Lord "As thou wilt!" is a sentence of resignation which every man should use, as his compass to direct him through this sea of troubles to the haven of rest." "He is Jehovah," says Eli; "let him do what is good in his eye."

Two great and immediate advantages will result from the observance of this precept. The first is, the paying a just debt of gratitude to our Almighty Father. When he perceives that we are content, resigning every thing to his disposal, he will assuredly be delighted with such conduct on our part — he will bless and protect us—in all our ways and in all our doings. He will cheer us with the beams of his mercy, and fortify us by an infusion of his holy spirit. "Shall the clay say to the potter, why hast thou formed me thus?" Presumption of this kind, let us studiously shun: for, as in obtaining the favours of heaven there will be an exceeding great reward, so, in provoking its wrath, there will be a proportionate punishment.

The second immediate advantage resulting from a cheerful compliance with the dispen-

sations of Providence is, the perfect contentment and happiness which will mark our conduct. Rarely chagrined, or provoked, or turbulent, our life will pass on as a smooth quiescent stream, enriching, while it beautifies, the surrounding country. No sudden murmurs — no rebellious opposition against the decrees of heaven — either adversity or prosperity will be welcomed alike.

Yes, my brethren, the truly pious and zealous Christian—however feigned or impracticable the doctrine may appear—the true Christian knows how to be abased, and how to abound. In every situation, in every reverse of things, whether for the better or the worse, he sees an Almighty hand that regulates all. He sees that the course of life of *one* human being, or of ten thousand human beings, is but a small particle in that vast and wonderful scale by which the universe is upheld: and that this life, or these lives, are ordained in a certain course, conformable to infinite wisdom, infinite justice, and infinite mercy. They form a part of the mighty whole—a link of the immeasurable chain which unites and upholds millions of worlds. No doubt *such* a Being knows, far better than ourselves, what is fit and proper for the regulation of his own

laws. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, are created and sustained by an unerring hand, an unsophisticated mind, and a power omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.

To the Christian, the true philosopher, who thinks thus, and acts according to such thoughts, this lower world will always bring happiness and peace. The iron shower of adversity may beat upon his head—the shafts of malice, envy, and detraction may be shot to wound his repose—and the brightest hopes and fondest delights may be suddenly turned into bitterness and woe—yet, his bosom is tranquil, his mind is composed, his prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving are still wafted to heaven. He remains as the adamant rock which repels and defies the opposing wave. The tempest may thunder at its feet, but it is the sunshine of heaven which encircles its head.

Lastly, he considers (what we ought all daily and hourly to consider) that the moment is fast approaching when all distinctions shall be levelled; when the splendour of rank will cease to dazzle, the voice of flattery to charm, and the blandishments of luxury to delight us: when neither the fondness of relatives,

nor the prayers of surrounding friends, can avert the fate which all mortality is hastening to experience. The cold and silent grave must be the lot both of the good and the bad. But the humble resigned Christian will, at the latter day, fall prostrate before his Redeemer and Judge, and triumphantly exclaim, " Lord I have never ceased to do thy will — to submit to thy decrees — to kiss the rod which thou hast lifted up to chasten me. Think upon me, O my God! for good concerning this. Lord pardon my transgressions, and receive me into glory."

That this may be the ultimate and happy lot of every one here assembled, God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

SERMON VIII.

LI. PSALM, latter part of 3d verse.

*My sin is ever before me.**

THE verses which precede that, of part of which the text is composed, are as follow :
“ Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness : according to the multitude thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness : and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my faults : and (in the words of the text) my sin is ever before me.”

The first thing that strikes us, upon a consideration of these verses, is, the strain of humility in the supplicant, and the confidence upon the *mercy* of that Being to whom the supplication is directed. The dejected and penitent monarch of Israel lays open, as it were, his very heart and reins before the Great Jehovah — because, adds he, in a sub-

* Preached at St. Mary's, April 11, 1824.

sequent verse, "behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me."

Observe, my brethren, with what unfeigned contrition — with what soul-touched sorrow — does this distinguished monarch, when prostrate before his Maker, entreat to be forgiven: not on the ground of his *merits* — not on any plea, title, or pretension of his *virtues* — but on the ground, and with the hope, entirely, of his Maker's benevolence and compassion: after his great goodness — according to the multitude of his mercies — does he wish his offences to be done away — to be washed thoroughly from his wickedness — and to be cleansed from his sin. "For (says he — as the only claim for such mercy and pardon —) I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me."

Not only therefore does he acknowledge his faults, but he confesses in the presence of the Almighty, that his Sin is ever before him. There is something peculiarly strong and expressive in this latter part of the verse. David knew it was very easy to acknowledge his faults — the exercise of the lips, after the wanderings of the heart, being sufficiently simple and obvious: but he also knew that

his Maker required some *other* attestation, some quicker and nicer feeling, some more cogent and correct testimony of compunction for past offences ; and therefore he adds — in the same spirit of prostration and earnestness — “ my sin is ever before me.” “ I am ever conscious, not only of my frailties and perversities — as being shapen in wickedness, and conceived in sin — but the enormity or enormities of my past offences is ever present with me : is ever pressing upon my recollection : is, in short, ever before me.”

We will now dwell, as it becomes us, upon the force of these words ; of their being a rule for our own guidance ; of the importance of a close attention to them, and of the salutary effects which will necessarily result from such unremitting attention.

In the first place, then, we must all along carry in our recollections, that these words are the warm and frank confession of one of the greatest Monarchs who ever sat upon an earthly throne : great, not only by the particular manner of his elevation to that throne — not only by the general splendor of his court, and extent and number of his victories — but great, from that *intellectual inspiration* with which it pleased Jehovah to endow him.

It is therefore, you see, the sentiment or confession of an eminently gifted human being in respect to *talent, observation, and knowledge*, both of human nature in general, and of the treachery of man's heart in particular. In this point of view, then, it is doubly imperative or binding upon us, not only to give this sentiment every possible degree of attention, but, to exhibit, in the tenor of our own conduct, the advantages which such sentiment most unquestionably holds forth.

This brings us immediately to the words themselves. "My sin is ever before me." The great task, or duty, for mortals invariably to perform, is, the being conscious of their infirmities: the thinking less of their virtues, and more of their sins: for the practice of the latter will necessarily lead to the manifestation of the former. We become good only in proportion to our knowledge, and abhorrence of, and abstinence from, evil. This is the main position: this is the broad, substantial, and universally applicable doctrine engrafted upon the words of the text; and to an illustration and enforcement thereof, the remainder of this discourse shall, by God's blessing, be devoted.

To dwell a moment upon *doubting* the proneness of man's heart to sin — upon the tendency of human nature to manifest those deeds which are called by St. Paul the works of the flesh, in opposition to those of the spirit — were a waste of words and of time: David having correctly and strongly put the case, that we are shapen in wickedness and conceived in sin. Now, my brethren, a consciousness of this truth, a heartfelt conviction of, and contrition for, this liability to sin, leads us naturally to seek elsewhere a consolation for, or alleviation of, our sufferings. And *where* should we go, and to whom should we betake ourselves, but to the fountain of light and life? to the God of mercy and truth? to the Saviour of compassion and redemption? to that omniscient and omnipotent Being, or Spirit, who, whether we are solitary in our chambers, or whether we take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea—is present, ready, and even anxious, not only to listen to our prayers, but to grant more than “either we desire or deserve:” upon the condition, nevertheless, that, in preferring such prayer, our sin is ever before us:

that, like the Publican, each of us smite upon our breast and say, "God be merciful to me—a sinner!"

The Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee is a most forcible illustration of the doctrine contained in the words of the text. Nor is it *very* improbable that our Saviour might have borne in mind the sentiment of David, when he delivered to the astonished ears of his pharisaical auditors, that exquisite and matchless parable of the folly of pride and self-presumption, and of the wisdom of humility and contrition.

No man, in his supplication to the Deity, could possibly, with his senses awakened, and with his reason cultivated, utter with his lips, that, which had neither a definite object, or which, however clearly and distinctly defined, was not to be attended with advantage in its fulfilment. Now the Scriptures say, first in the language of the Psalmist, and secondly in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, that, in such prayer and supplication, our "sin is to be ever before us,"—and that the Almighty is to be entreated to have "mercy upon us miserable sinners." This is the spirit of prayer before the throne of grace—to think nothing of, or rather to discard every thing,

connected with, our supposed merits and worthinesses; and to rely entirely upon the multitude of God's mercies—upon his great goodness—to have our offences done away: to be washed thoroughly from our wickedness, and to be cleansed from our sin: and in order that such purification and salutary results may follow, let us devoutly and zealously acknowledge before our heavenly father that our Sin is ever before us; that we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and that there is no health in us." In the approaching season of solemnity, we have all sufficient causes and reasons for this exercise of humiliation, of self-scrutiny, and of entire resignation to the will of heaven. In commemoration of our Saviour's agony and sufferings, let us, for a short season at least, be crucified unto the world, and the world unto us. God Almighty, in his infinite and unspeakable goodness, hath as it were ordained these seasons to be set apart for the preservation of our souls unto everlasting life. *Now* it is, that our Sins are to be ever before us: that we are to acknowledge our faults: that we are to be but as dust and ashes in the presence of the great Jehovah: to fit us for the com-

memoration of the death of his Son, and to enable us to appreciate, more justly and fully, his resurrection from the dark regions of the grave. Away then, my brethren, with every proud, and vain, and worldly feeling; pray with uplifted hands, and with your whole heart, for succour, compassion, and support: bend the stubborn knee; and exercise the ready lips in prayer, penitence, and undisguised confession of errors or sins committed.

The great Jehovah, thus addressed, will, as David in the first instance, and as our Saviour in the second, tells us, vouchsafe to listen to, and to realise, the object of our petitions. Where the heart is laid open, where a deep and unfeigned sense of God's loving kindness, and of man's natural depravity, *equally* pervades the human breast—there, and in such case, the great goodness, the multitude of mercies, of the same Jehovah will, instantly and unreservedly, be extended towards the creature, thus prostrate in dust and ashes before him.

Possible however it is, that some, even among Yourselves, may yet have an indecision, if not strong doubt, respecting the *efficacy* of this doctrine. You may fancy, in

short, that some portion of prayer should glow with a recollection of your *merits*; of what you have *done* towards the attainment of your own *prosperity*, or towards the comfort and bettering of the conditions of your families or fellow creatures; of the regularity of your attendance on divine worship, or of your domestic conduct; of your temperance, forbearance, equanimity, generosity, and regular fulfilment of what you conceive to be religious duties!?

Now, whatever may be the nature of, or whatever the degree of consolation arising from, such reflections—(and God forbid that there should *not* be some consolation arising from them), remember, in the first instance, that you are addressing a Spirit, or Being, who is all wisdom, all power, and all perfection; who has gifted you with the *very means* of performing the fore-mentioned duties; but who, unluckily for your own self-congratulations, knows how much better—how much more fully and effectually—all the virtues, which you have been zealously recording, and upon which you so confidently rely, might have been exercised for the advantage of mankind: how much more completely and vividly your light might have shone

before men—that they might have seen your good works, and glorified your father which is in heaven.

Whatever you have done well—or done to the glory of God — is duly registered within an imperishable record. Dwell not therefore upon such admitted excellence in prayer : there is no need of it :—for, in the second place, as the Almighty well knows what hath passed both in your secret thoughts and in your outward actions—and will never fail to reward the constant exercise of goodness—it should seem that the very *thoughts*, much more the very *mention*, of such indications of goodness, on your part, implied a forgetfulness of them in your heavenly father. And, further, ask your own hearts — prone as you know them to be to vanity, and self delusion — ask them, whether, by a perseverance in, or repetition of, such form of prayer, you may not, in the end, become lax — indifferent — ungodly — in your future intercourse with the Almighty and his Creatures ?

No :—as, on the one hand, there is no need even to *think* upon excellences of which the Almighty must have known the performance capable of greater perfection — so, on the other hand, knowing our infirmities, and

being convinced of our depravities, we must take heed, lest, by thinking we *stand*, we fall into the most abject state of helplessness: Remember that Abraham, when in communication with his Maker — approached — spake — and entreated — with fear and trembling: confessing himself to be but dust and ashes in the presence of his Creator. And David, the most illustrious of Israel's monarchs, unfeignedly, yea, readily admits — not that his monarchical fame — not that his celebrity as a warrior — not that his renown as an inspired Psalmist — but that — his sins — were ever before him. He, too, felt — as an enlightened individual — as a wise sovereign — and as a resistless chieftain — that, in the presence of his Maker, he was, literally and truly, as Abraham was — dust and ashes: his sins were ever *before* him. The consciousness of this truth pulled down the pride of human nature, however exalted; it converted the diadem into a crown of thorns, and the robe and sceptre of state into sackcloth and ashes. He waters his couch with his tears: he mourns in prayer and is vexed: his heart is sometimes disquieted, and the fear of death is fallen upon him: but, then, he consoles himself by casting his burden upon

the Lord, who shall nourish him, and who shall not suffer the righteous to fall for ever.

Such was the exemplary conduct of David: and such, in conclusion, must be the conduct of each and all of us, if we wish to make our pilgrimage through this vale of misery and tears terminate in a resting place, where misery is not known, and where tears are not shed. There must be no compromise: no wavering: no lukewarmness: no insincerity: no balancing of *supposed virtues* against palpable and grievous *sins*. The remembrance of the latter must be always grievous unto us, must always be uppermost in our minds, and always acknowledged before the throne of mercy; for we "must acknowledge our faults, and our sin must be ever before us."

True, it undoubtedly is, that a *Christian* hath *that* consolation which it could not fall to the lot of David to possess. In the death of a Saviour, the christian hath an assurance of redemption; and the consolations of the cross dispel the fears, which, under the Law of Moses, might have agitated the distressed Israelite. But, although the redeeming comforts of the Gospel are great, wonderful, and encouraging, they are neither incentives to lukewarmness, nor palliatives of fanaticism

and folly. Shall we continue in sin that Grace may abound? God forbid — says the great Apostle of the Gentiles: and so says every honest and enlightened minister of the word of Christ.

If we fly to the Cross because we have sinned, and have made no atonement, felt and expressed no penitence, nor turned from the evil of our ways — we fly, not to a merciful Saviour, but to an avenging God. Prayer, penitence, entire prostration and humiliation of heart and mind, are, at the foot of the Cross, the claims which we are to offer up for pardon, and the conditions upon which, alone, that pardon can be procured. The Christian dispensation wins us over from the repetition of sin, by softening the asperities of the Mosaic dispensation: but if we, *now*, cease to be influenced by such gracious assurances, or such gentle remedies, we shall doubtless relapse into our original morbid condition, and the last state of us will be worse than the first. Let us all lay these truths seriously to our hearts; nor let us be lulled by the treacherous unction of that creed, or of those principles, which would deprive man of the noblest energies of his mind, and the world of the advantages of the brightest patterns of meek-

ness, sincerity, humility, and deeply rooted christian resignation! If, on the one hand, our sin must be ever before us, as a terror and a warning not to relapse into it—so, on the other, the promises of the Gospel are held out to *them*, who *strive*, heart and mind, body and soul, to make their calling and election sure: of whose *labour* of love, God is not forgetful, and for whose *righteousness of conduct*, there is reserved a Crown of Glory that never can fade away.

SERMON IX.

Mark x. latter part of 14th verse.

*Of such is the kingdom of God.**

THESE were the words spoken by our blessed Saviour, to those who were disposed to prevent little children from being presented unto him. The context runs thus. "And they brought young children unto him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not — for of such is the kingdom of God." Our Saviour then goes on to address those seriously, and apart, who were instrumental in thus interfering — observing, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter

* Preached at St. Mary's, May 9, 1824, subsequently to a CONFIRMATION in the same week.

therein." Then turning towards the children, thus flocking around him, "he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

Such were the memorable words of our Lord respecting the vital interest taken in the present and future welfare of children. He first observed to those, who officiously intruded, respecting the keeping of them back from his presence, "Suffer little children to come unto me,"—which is followed by something of a *command* not to keep them *back*—"forbid them not:" that is, not only "let them freely approach me, but on no account *forbid* their advance." It is manifest, from the plain import of these words, that our Saviour was hurt and offended, as well as surprised, at the conduct of his disciples. The people—fathers and mothers—were anxious to present their offspring unto him; not only perhaps to gratify their eager curiosity as to the *identity* of the mighty Character, of whom the fame was noised abroad throughout all Judea, but that they might receive *personally* (a circumstance so gratifying to parental feelings) some little *mark* of his notice and condescension: or, as the Gospel says, that he might touch them.

They crowded therefore around our Saviour, and were anxious to present their families unto him. But the disciples, under the impression, no doubt, that they were occupied in the faithful discharge of their duties, rebuked them : restrained and kept back the pressing multitude from the presence of their master. “ But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased ;” and told them, not only to suffer the children to come to him, but on no account to *forbid* their approach—for of such was the kingdom of God. He then further remarked that, whosoever did not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, should in no wise enter therein : meaning, that, comparatively with the real state of knowledge, which they *ought* to possess, towards the attainment of everlasting happiness, their minds were in a perfect state of ignorance and infancy ; and, further, that, if they did not receive the truths of the Christian religion, which he had promulgated, or was about to promulgate, with the unqualified obedience, and unsuspecting innocency, of little children, they would on no account be remunerated with those rewards which his Father had laid up for them in heaven.

Then, to shew, not only his fondness for

the children thus brought to him, but yet more sensibly to correct his disciples for repulsing them, our Saviour turned towards these children—took them up in his arms, “laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

Such, my brethren, was the affectionate solicitude of the Saviour of the world towards lost mankind, even in its earliest and most helpless state of existence : and he, who thus evinced such parental regard for the wandering flock of Israel, in its earliest growth, continued it with tenfold solicitude and anxiety as the powers of the mind expanded, and as the principles of the heart developed themselves. The miracles of Christ were performed equally on the young and the old : the principles of his religion were adapted to every capacity, in every situation of life ; and if those, to whom they were addressed, did not comprehend, or, comprehending, did not choose to improve their conduct, the fault was either in the perversity of their intellects, or in the hardness of their hearts. The sun of revelation shone brightly and vividly over their heads ; yet if the eyes were obstinately closed, how could its lustre be witnessed ?

But there is one thing—arising out of the

transaction just described — and more particularly connected with the immediate cause or foundation of this discourse—that cannot be disputed : namely, the unqualified affection of our Lord towards his creatures, in a state of infancy and helplessness : and, further, the perfectly infantine state of knowledge, at *all* periods of human existence, unless it be invigorated and influenced by the knowledge which makes us “ wise unto salvation.”

In illustration therefore of this subject, it cannot fail to be noticed, that all Christian churches, and our own, emphatically, in the number of them, have been anxious to shew their care and solicitude about the religious instruction of *all* admitted within the pale of Christianity. Even before the infant can have the least consciousness of the objects which surround him, **THE CHILD** “ is received into the congregation of Christ’s flock, is signed with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil—and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end.” All this is performed, by the ministers of our religion, on the *faith* and

pledge of the child's *sureties*; or Godfathers and Godmothers. These make the promise for the infant, on the implied obligation that such promise, when the child comes to age, "himself is bound to perform."

Thus, on the basis of Christ's attachment towards children, is this important ceremony performed: but, on the same basis, is another not less important ceremony performed: the *ratifying* and *confirming* of that promise and vow in their own persons, and acknowledging themselves "bound to believe, and to do all those things which their Godfathers and Godmothers had *before* undertaken *for* them."

This ratification and confirmation is made in the House of God, and usually in the assembled presence of hundreds of our fellow creatures—in a form and manner so solemn, so affecting, and so efficient, that it should seem, as far as human ordinances and institutions went, nothing could be more solemn and efficient. It is made too, at an age, when those, who make it, are not only, on the one hand, competent—from a certain time of life—but on the other hand, from a comparative ignorance of worldly modes and manners, and a comparative freedom from its

contaminations and impurities, are in a proper and fit state of mind—to make it.

The ceremony indeed to which I allude—that of CONFIRMATION — has, as you well know, very recently taken place within this large and populous parish. Nearly twelve hundred of our fellow creatures have prostrated themselves before the altar, in the presence of their Maker, to absolve their Godfathers and Godmothers from all responsibility as to their future conduct in life: to ratify, with their own declaration, the contract so solemnly made in their infancy: and, be it permitted me to say, to discharge a debt, as heavy in its amount, and as honourable in its discharge, as any which, through life, can be incurred. And here—one of the first things which strikes us, is, the sight of so many young, inexperienced, and shortly to be made ACCOUNTABLE, human beings, approaching the altar of their religion; prostrate before their Maker; and receiving the benediction of the superior Pastor of the church. The hopes, the fears, the anxieties, the thousand affectionate solitudes, working in different channels, but equally powerful in their respective operations, agitate the bosoms of parents, of relatives, and friends. A vast

and untried world—a deceitful and corrupted state of society—comfort, peace, credit, and happiness—wretchedness, misery, want and woe—these are equally before them. It is the very solemnity, but perfect simplicity, of such a congregation of inexperienced worshippers, which not only strikes the eye with interest, but touches the heart with anxiety. And why ?! Because, my brethren, we bring *with us our own experiences* to a consideration of the subject : because we think, not only of what has happened to *us*, but of what has happened to *others*, since we ourselves were occupied in the like devotion.

The inevitable maladies of humanity must be borne with firmness, since they cannot be repelled with success ; and we have the consolation of thinking how such maladies may be softened, or endured, by the *principles* which such a religious ceremony is calculated to inspire in young and susceptible hearts. These candidates for confirmation are generally at an age when the fancy is active, when the passions are strong, and when the habits are beginning to take a decided character. It is religion—the RELIGION OF CHRIST—which presents to this fancy the loveliest forms, which controls these passions with the gentlest

sway, which confirms these habits in acts of goodness, of mercy, of kindness, and Christian charity.

Suppose the same number of young people, *uninstructed* in religious and virtuous education, moving, as it were, mechanically, and according to the wild and vicious impulses of a *mere worldly* education, from the cradle to the grave—what an aggregate of misery, what a mass of wretchedness, must you contemplate, in anticipation! The earliest duties of a Christian, those between parent and child—those which render home sweet, and as it were, sacred—those, which lighten the load of woe, and bind human beings together by the strongest and most indissoluble ties—the duties and offices, too, of brothers and sisters—and, in advanced life, of husband and wife, and members of civilised society—how, I ask, would these *essential* duties be fulfilled by human beings, launched, as it were, upon the ocean of life, without compass to direct, or star to illumine?

That STAR and that COMPASS is the religion of Christ; and the methods of inculcating it are at once plain, simple, wholesome, and effective, in the services of our Liturgy.

The *Catechism* of the Church of England

is one of the earliest and most efficient forms of religious instruction, which, upon principles already explained, leads to the *Confirmation* by the Bishop: and these are followed up by a participation of the Holy Communion, or Sacrament; to which, as I cannot doubt but that a considerable number of the candidates alluded to, may be here assembled in divine worship, I shall devote the latter part of this Discourse.

But first, call to mind, that, whatever may be the principles inculcated in early youth, and however pure and blameless you may consider yourselves in making the vow of confirmation—not the most enlightened intellect, nor the most upright heart, can secure you from the casualties to which, from within and without, you will be unavoidably exposed, from an intercourse with an artful and a designing world. Whatever casualties arise from *within*—from the natural depravity of the human heart, from a tendency to sin and corruption, from the lurking seeds of vice and sensuality, — tear them from your bosom. Fortify yourselves by prayer, and by frequent communion with Christ, and a participation of the Supper of our Lord.

Whatever mischiefs and dangers threaten

from *without*—from the voice of flattery and of praise, from the snares of insidious, profligate, and unprincipled human beings, from the facility offered to *repetition* of crime by escaping detection of its first commission, from vanity, weakness, frivolous pleasures, and a contemptible and unproductive manner of spending time, and wearing out human existence—whatever mischief and dangers threaten from *these external* causes, again, I say, fly to prayer, and to a communion with Christ: and let this comforting refuge be followed up by a constant observance of Sabbatical duties: by devoutly worshipping your Maker in his holy Sanctuary: and by seeking fit and convenient opportunities of “feeding on him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.”

In conclusion; understand what is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper: and observe how simple and how practicable the thing required is:—“to examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death—and be in charity with all men.” This examination is resolvable into two parts: the first part relates

to the Examinant and his God—the second, to himself and his fellow creatures. God only knows, whether those, who repent of their former sins, repent in *deed* and in *truth*: and God only knows whether they stedfastly purpose to lead a new life, to have a lively faith in his mercy, through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death. All this lies between the examinant, the person confessing and examining himself, and his Maker: but the *fruits* of this examination, by which its sincerity and worth will be attested, must be gathered from the *course of life* which follows—and that consists, in being in “*charity with all men* :” in displaying a kind, christian hearted, benevolent, and amiable disposition: not returning evil for evil, but contrariwise, blessing: not by disobedience, ill will, malice or hatred in the heart—but by a frank, forgiving, generous, and affectionate disposition towards all classes and conditions of human beings: remembering that, in the estimation of Almighty God, we are *all* found wanting in the balance of truth, equity, and justice.

Happy the dispositions, happy the frames of mind, of those who can make this self-examination in the pure spirit of Christian

abasement and humiliation ; and yet happier are those who can rise from such self examination with the *conviction* of being in perfect charity with all men. They may wash their hands in innocency, and so approach (as is now prepared to receive them) the table of the Supper of the Lord. Such I earnestly entreat to become, this day, guests at a festival so holy, so comforting, so “strengthening and refreshing to their souls and bodies.”

They are about to enter, as it were, upon a new sphere of life : to think, to judge, and to act, more exclusively for themselves : henceforward to become more intimately allied to the flock of their divine Master ; and to consider themselves, in all their future conduct, as more immediately responsible to *him* for whatsoever they *think, say, or do*. May this alliance—may this intimacy—grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength : may it make them increase in wisdom and worth, as well as in years : and in all the present and future relationships of life, as children, as brothers, as sisters, as wives, husbands, and parents, may it operate towards the attainment of every rational and virtuous gratification : towards making them worthy members of society, and fit inmates

of those dwellings, where, in the language of the Psalmist, "the voice of joy and health is heard."

God grant, that all fondly and virtuously formed anticipations, in the bosoms both of parents and children, may, from the ceremony which hath taken place, be abundantly realised:—and if any thing so secondary, as wishes and vows preferred from the quarter whence these prayers are put up, be deserving of ascending to the throne of mercy, God grant that the *future lives* of the YOUNG, may more than realise the fondest wishes of the OLD: so that, in the future dispensations of Providence, both parents and children may be equally convinced, that verily "there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth." Amen, and Amen.

SERMON X.

Psalm xxxvii. 25th verse.

*Yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor
his seed begging their bread.*

THE holy Scriptures abound with encouragements to diligence, and exhortations to virtue. In almost every book, or portion of the Bible, which is most justly and emphatically called the **BOOK OF BOOKS**, the attentive reader may discover the immense advantage of pursuing a virtuous or righteous career, and of attending with diligence to his particular calling in life: to the performance of his duty (as our catechism well expresses it) “in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him.”

If there were nothing to distinguish virtue from vice, and benevolence from oppression, if the same ends and the same rewards were

* Preached at St. Mary's, May 16, 1824.

held out to both the profligate and the good, then, perhaps, we might say that there is not a God who governs the world, and who rules the universe with equity; then, we might be led to tax providence with injustice, and to imagine that we were toiling in this miserable scene of tumult and vexation, without the prospect of reaching an harbour in which to shelter our tempest-beaten vessels.

But, ask your own hearts, my brethren, whether it be thus in God's moral government of the world? Commune with yourselves in private, and see if you can find the least plea or pretext for acquiescing in the foregoing mode of argument? On the contrary, after duly reflecting upon the causes and effects which you see daily passing before your eyes—after noticing carefully, and for a *considerable* period, what is the issue both of a bad and a good conduct, are you not disposed fully to accede to the opinion of David, and say, “I have been young and am now old, yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.”

The *manner* in which this beautiful and impressive observation is made, is deserving of your especial attention. First, David says, “I have been young and am now old:” that

is, I have passed through a considerable portion of human existence, and am now arrived at a sufficiently matured period to pronounce judgment with some degree of *certainty*. The remark is neither a casual nor a careless one: it is not hastily said; but is the result of that *experience* which a long intercourse with the world enables the inspired Psalmist to make. Hence we may learn to appreciate its *truth* as well as *beauty*.

What is it, secondly, which David observes? He says, that he never saw the righteous forsaken. Now, this very assertion, from a character so well *qualified* to make it, carries with it a wonderful degree of persuasion; and those, who may not *comprehend* upon what principles, or foundation it is, that the righteous are never forsaken, have good reason, nevertheless, to acquiesce in the justice of the Psalmist's remark. But the greater part of such as are here assembled, know, I trust, what *are* the principles by which the righteous are protected. They are assuredly protected by those principles which form a part, as it were, of the Deity: which pervade all matter: which operate throughout all space; which called man into existence from the dust of the earth, and which shall reanimate

him at the last day of retributive justice. God's mercy and righteousness are everywhere apparent; in the physical as well as the moral, in the animate as well as the inanimate world. But, in the formation and intellectual character of man, they shine pre-eminently conspicuous. These have taught him to know right from wrong; to shew pity to the weak; to punish the rebellious; to enlighten the ignorant; to encourage the diligent, and to reward the righteous.

Look abroad in the world, and see if the righteous are forsaken. They may not be always RICH — but is there no other protection than that afforded by wealth? Or rather, of all species of protection, what plants round a human being so strong a fence, so impregnable a bulwark, as the respect and esteem of the discerning and better part of the community? In the hour of fear and of peril, of perturbation and alarm, from earthly apprehensions—who stand so firmly as the righteous? In *whose* defence will more hearts burn with zeal, or more hands be raised with alacrity and courage? Are we disposed to protect men, in such situations, on account of their *wealth* alone? No: but from the *good* which they have *done* with that wealth;

and what is this, after all, I ask, but finding *protection* on account of their *righteousness*.

Again:—as a further and most striking illustration of the truth and force of David's remark. We see, in the ever-shifting scenes of life, characters ever new and ever varying; and the bubble which glitters so attractively to-day, bursts into emptiness on the morrow. The vicious, the proud, the prophane, and the blasphemous, leave no traces of action behind but such as cause their memories to be branded with contempt and disgrace. Let peril await them, upon what basis can they stand? The merely wealthy and oppressive man will offer all his barns and all his stores that his soul may not be required of him this night—the licentious will quake with apprehension when the day of reckoning arrives,—and the reprobate and blasphemous will sink beneath a load of conscious guilt, for *not knowing the name of their God*—or, *when knowing it, in taking it so frequently in vain*. There are perils which such characters must *of necessity* meet; but how stands the *righteous* man in that awful and critical hour—when the *master of the vineyard* shall unexpectedly return and demand an account of the work which has been done in his absence? He



may be sinking under the weight of *poverty*, but do not let us suppose that he is *forsaken* on that account. God seeth not, judgeth not, as man sees and judges. Beneath the homely vestment, and with a forbidding exterior, there is sometimes to be found a brave and invincible spirit : a spirit, that scorns to treat man with cruelty, or his Maker with profaneness : and into such a soul the heavenly messenger of our Almighty Father shall pour the balm of consolation ; and while the *earthly* frame seems sinking beneath the weight of penury and neglect, the immortal Spirit is only preparing to put on its wings, and to fly into the bosom of its God. Let me ask you, then, if the righteous are forsaken ? and whether the author of my text had not abundant reason to utter the sentiment which forms the subject-matter of our attention ?

Let us now make a few remarks upon the latter part of the text—in which David says that he never saw the *seed* of the righteous *begging their bread*. In proportion to the comforts of the righteous themselves, will be the blessings which attend their families. And how is this remark verified in our daily intercourse with society ? Look at a virtuous and *industrious* family. Do we see them

begging their bread? Blessed be God, in this highly civilised and happy country, prosperity is not the exclusive reward of the wealthy or titled in rank. Here, talents, directed by industry, and supported by moral worth, offer as high and certain a road to distinction, as any that can be followed from birth, or other adventitious cause. Here, the righteous need not *beg* their bread, nor *do* they. Indolence droops, for indolence is no part of righteousness. The observation of David, then, is remarkably verified, when we consider its application to this state of society. In the private and public establishments of our country, we have abundant proof of the seed of the righteous not *begging* their bread.

Whatever systems or modes of government may influence *other* countries—whether they be always regulated by virtue, or strengthened by wisdom—it is not necessary here to discuss: but most certain it is, that, in the constitution of our OWN COUNTRY, we see daily and speaking proofs of attention paid to the excellence of the head and heart: to the weight of moral worth, as well as of intellectual attainment: for some of the most distinguished characters which ever

adorned the annals of this empire, whether in church or state, have unquestionably owed their gradual advances to the eminent situations which they filled, *not* because they were *rich*—not because they were descended of noble rank—but, probably paramount to such claims and pretensions *alone*, because they possessed *integrity* and *industry*: in other words, what the Psalmist emphatically calls RIGHTEOUSNESS: a principle, or qualification, founded greatly upon the unshaken basis of christianity; and such as will survive the remembrance and admiration of every attainment arising from mere splendour, or pomp, or luxury, or power. Let no one therefore despair: let no one droop under fearful apprehensions. Let no child of misery mourn without hope: let no shipwrecked orphan sink beneath the apparent horrors of his situation. Does he love industry? let him seek, and he shall obtain his bread. Does he fear and trust in God? God says he will never leave nor forsake such as so confide in him. But then the world looks coldly and frowningly upon him—and can he stoop to menial employment? Let him consider what was the lowly occupation of his Redeemer—and that *he* sometimes had not

where to lay his head. But how will this child of sorrow endure the severities to which he may be exposed? Who is to give rest to his wearied limbs, or infuse gladness into his sinking soul? I answer—HE who has sworn *never to forsake the righteous!* Difficulties are too often magnified through the medium by which they are viewed. Let them approach, and we shall not find them quite so insurmountable as our affrighted imaginations had supposed them to be.

Such, my brethren, are the observations, I may say truths, which seem naturally to grow out of a due consideration of the emphatic words of the text. I now come, as the second and concluding division of this Discourse, to shew how this subject is connected with *that* institution, for which I am this day the willing, rather, I fear, than the efficient, advocate. And first, I must entreat you to consider, in what place, and under what circumstances, this address or appeal is made. The parish, in which this House of God is situated, contains a population of not fewer than one hundred thousand souls: and from this immense number, in which many thousands are left desolate and unenlightened by education, *six hundred only*

of the poor, needy, and ignorant, receive moral and religious instruction according to the discipline and principles of the established church of this country. Now, what is the reflection which every enlightened mind acted upon by a feeling heart, must make? I am doubtless addressing many parents, in this large congregation, who have seen their children grow up a blessing and a comfort to them, in consequence of their having had righteous principles, and virtuous habits, inculcated into them in early youth: in other words, in consequence of having received a moral and religious, as well as what is called an accomplished, education: for what are *all worldly* accomplishments, without a virtuous disposition, an affectionate heart, and an upright and religious line of conduct? What is the glitter of dress, and the charm of gaiety, to that candidate for worldly distinction, who has no resources in his own bosom to which he can fly for comfort and succour, after the mechanical and short-lived part he is acting has ceased to attract attention or win applause?

It is therefore to *Parents*, who are blessed with united, well-educated, well-regulated families, that I appeal with confidence, as well

as with propriety, to sympathise strongly with the wretched state of those, who, parents like themselves, have only the melancholy resource left, of expressing an unavailing wish to see the feet of their children directed in the paths of righteousness and peace, rather than in those ways—which may make them “swift to shed blood.” And yet, upon equally sure grounds, the appeal is made to *every branch and member of society*: to every degree of relationship. Brothers, sisters, kindred, kind, are each and all, in a greater or less measure, affected in a consideration of this momentous position: namely, that, without the application of some such corrective as the establishment of the school in question, an immense quantity of ignorance, and of its too frequent concomitant, vice, will be let loose upon society. There are *thousands*, therefore, whose fates are involved in the education of a few *hundreds*: and there is no saying to what extent, and in how many shapes, the good, which the proposed establishment may produce, will extend. But further. The District in behalf of which I plead, and which contains a population of 20,000 souls —hath absolutely *no* establishment *at all* for the education of the poorer classes of society. With-

out therefore making the *least* appeal to your *passions*, it is only wished that, according to the plainest logical inferences, your *understandings*, judgments, and experiences, would go fully along with me, in the admission of the necessity, the peremptory, dire necessity, of spreading religious and moral instruction over a larger surface of society ; and, in proportion, of making the hearts both of *widow* and *offspring* to sing for joy !

A few words only as to an important branch of our discussion ; and which, although it is often honestly, and conscientiously brought forward, is nevertheless sometimes made use of as a plea or pretext for the withholding of charitable aid. I mean, the question as to the *greater* degree of *good* or *harm*, resulting from the *enlightening* of the minds of the **POOR**. If, my brethren, we could suppose that those who cannot *read*, cannot also *see*, *comprehend*, and *feel*, then there might be some force in the objection ; but the fact, as we all know well enough, without the mention of particular instances, is, that the common people *do* see, comprehend, and feel, pretty strongly ; and, without the help of sound knowledge, and religious instruction,

would see and feel to the worst of all possible purposes. Go to a poor, *uneducated*, father of a family, and enflame his passions, and pervert his reason, by instilling into him principles of the most specious nature, and of the most mischievous tendency. He will hear, he will understand, and, what is worse, he will *act*—unless some wholesome restraining power be implanted within him to keep his feet from going astray, and his hands from the commission of crime. Now, we contend, that in these SCHOOLS, where the national religion is inculcated, we do, in fact, furnish the susceptible breast of such an illiterate poor man with the very *means* of repelling the scoffs of the atheist, and the snares and seductions of the unrighteous: we do indeed fortify his sinking spirit, and arm him with the triple strength of endurance, submission, and content. The stirrer up of sedition, of rebellion, and irreligion, may say—what the mockers of Job once said, to destroy the peace of mind of that great and suffering man—“curse God, and die:” but the poor, and well principled; and righteous man will reply, in the words of Job himself—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter

lay upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this vile body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

It is for the inspiration of sentiments like into *these* — produced, I verily believe, by such an education as is received in our National Schools—that your alms are this day thus zealously and thus conscientiously solicited. The good, about to be produced, is not problematical and remote, but certain and immediate. Blessed be God! the work of Charity and of brotherly love hath already begun. The foundations of the Institution (of which the outlines are detailed in the printed papers already circulated) are not only dug out, but the walls of this little Sion of christian instruction are already raised above the earth.* Many enlightened and liberally-disposed christians have also lent a helping hand in this labour of love; and God will doubtless reward them, "threefold into their bosoms," in more ways and means than I can presume point out, or they can possibly conceive.

The building was completed and taken possession of on day the 25th of October, 1824. It is calculated to SIX HUNDRED CHILDREN, besides having offices for a Teacher, Master and Mistress, &c.

But, if much hath been already *done* from liberal contributions, bear in mind, I beseech you, that much requires *to be done* from similar sources of aid ; and it has been, if I may so speak, on the faith, and with the conviction, that such expectations will be realised, that those expenses and that responsibility have been incurred, without which it was impossible to give consistency and efficacy to the plan, so that it might meet the wishes of the enlightened and humane ; and so as, in fact, to remedy the evil of which the existence was but too obvious and general.

Yet more hath been done than giving proofs of the speedy appearance of the *outward* form of this establishment. Instruction, necessarily to a limited number, hath been already imparted. A sixth portion only of those to be admitted within the walls of the Institution, have been making advances in moral and religious improvement ; and many of those voices, which you have heard this day exercised in their Maker's praise, had, scarcely two months ago, perhaps, been taught to pronounce his holy name ; or if pronounced, to make it a by-word and a jest. Here, surely, my brethren, here is a promise of future

excellence: here is an earnest of great and incalculable benefit! Here are no theoretical visions of doubtful good, but obvious demonstrations of positive and substantial advantage. Promote them therefore by your friendly and generous aid. Encourage such virtuous habits: strengthen such infantine weakness; give maturity to the seed, which hath been already dropped into the earth; for your countenance and support shall be as the sun and rains of heaven to cause that seed to grow up into a goodly tree, and to yield abundant and nutritious fruit. If that support be withdrawn, then shall it be as the cold frost and the cutting blast which shall cause its premature dissolution.

But one word more, and I conclude. The temple of worship in which you are now assembled, hath been recently *consecrated** according to the religious rites and ceremonies of our country. An equally acceptable deed of consecration to God, is yet to follow. Consecrate it by your ALMS. It is the *first* donation which you are called upon to make—but give, as if it were the *last*: for who shall calculate on the casualties of human life!

* See CONSECRATION SERMON; ante.

Faith and hope, great and acceptable as these virtues are to Almighty God, are yet, we are told, inferior to that work of CHARITY. I will therefore only sincerely and conscientiously add, that, whatever be your donation—be it great or small—bestow it readily, and from the heart: “not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a CHEERFUL GIVER.”

SERMON XI.

Luke xvi. 25th verse.

*But Abraham said, " Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things—but, now, he is comforted, and thou art tormented.**

THE parable of the Rich Man and the beggar Lazarus—is, perhaps, of all those in the New Testament, one which is the most strongly impressed upon our memories from youth upwards. Through the whole of this parable, the invisible state after death is described by images borrowed from the present life, and from the objects of our senses: yet is the whole marked by something awful and preternatural. The place of the wretched, and of the happy, each strikes us with a peculiar and a powerful emotion: the dark and desperate state of the rich man, and the

* Preached at St. Mary's, May 27, 1824.

heavenly and enviable state of the poor man—each contrasted by their previous conditions—makes a strong hold upon the imagination: but wise and prudent would it be, my brethren, if, in recollecting the circumstances of the rich man and the beggar, we pondered maturely upon the consequences: on the lesson to be learnt from gluttonous and rapacious voluptuousness, and from treating the wants of our distressed fellow creature with cruelty and contempt.

The parable is thus written by St. Luke. “There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who laid at his gate full of sores; and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table—moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.”

This description is sufficiently strong to convince us that the former character enjoyed all the luxuries of this life; that his equipage, if I may so speak, was splendid; his attire gorgeous; his servants numerous, and his fare, or repasts, sumptuous in the extreme. If unbounded wealth and perpetual variety of sensual gratification could have made the

rich man happy, *he* surely was the happiest of mortals. To eat, to drink, and to be merry, was all his business in this world, and as it too palpably appears, all his ideas of preparation for the next. But in the midst of his splendour, reclining near his marble porch, and spurned and insulted perhaps by every domestic in his retinue, there appeared a certain Beggar, in the last stage of human wretchedness. Disease had afflicted and wasted his body; distress, perhaps of every description, had agonised his mind. *He* had no splendid couch on which his trembling limbs could repose, no healing physician to allay the pangs of pain, or snatch him from the premature end which awaited him: and what is more bitter to think upon, he had not even one morsel of bread to satisfy his craving appetite and to nourish his sinking frame. But the merciful eye of heaven distinguished him where he sat, naked and in want. God Almighty considered him with that compassion and regard, which we may be well assured would be the last sentiment that ever could have possessed the rich man, revelling amidst his sumptuous banquets.

It seems this wretched beggar "desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich

man's table"—but this was probably denied him—and gasping in the extremity of distress, the very dogs came and licked his sores. Could the thoughtless, extravagant, licentious character have foreseen the decrees of heaven—could he, like a second Belshazzar in the midst of his feast, have been permitted to read his future doom, inscribed in emblazoned characters on his tapestried walls—how would he have shrunk into the trembling coward! and supplicated and entreated the very wretch, whom he had before perhaps commanded his servants to insult, to enter in, and to partake *liberally* of the luxuries of his table. But this was not permitted him. “And it came to pass that the beggar died—and was carried by angels . . . into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.” The same end, you observe, awaited them both. The grave is the final resting place of all mankind; and there is neither cunning therein, nor retreat therefrom. The rich man probably did not long survive the poor man. Both paid the common debt of nature. Both were consigned to that receptacle, which levels all distinction of persons, and renders poverty, and wealth, and rank, alike unavailing. Now, mark the result. But,

first, we may naturally suppose, that the body of the rich man was borne to the grave with all the preciseness, pomp, and solemnity, of funeral rites : and we will further suppose, that the stately monument was erected to inscribe virtues which the deceased might . . or might not . . have possessed : that every attention had been paid to render his last moments easy and unapprehensive . . . and that even no relative or friend was forgotten in the testamentary disposition of his property . . . Yet, I say, my brethren, mark the result of the respective interments of the characters in question. “ In hell (that is, in a state invisible from this world—the word literally signifying *darkness*) in hell, the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus” —where *he* would have surrendered the possession of worlds to have been — “reclining upon the Patriarch’s bosom.” Dark and dreary as might have been his own abode, he could nevertheless, from thence, have viewed a place of happiness and light . . And the first object that struck him, was,—Lazarus—the very poor, abandoned wretch—who lay at his gate full of sores—this once neglected and abject creature—reposing in a state of glory

and blessedness. The being carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, is an expression according to the Jewish mode of thinking and speaking; and the meaning is, in general, that he was received into a place of happiness, and admitted to peculiar honour. The Jews had deservedly a great veneration for Abraham, on account of his eminent faith and obedience; and they assigned to *him* the first place in the state of the blessed. Our Saviour, in this parable, availed himself of the national traditions and modes of belief of those to whom it was addressed.

What followed the discovery of Lazarus by the rich man? The sight, as we may naturally conceive, powerfully affected him: and he felt the necessity of exciting *that* compassion in the bosom of the *beggar*, which he must have been conscious of never having felt towards him *himself*. Ah, my brethren, here is a powerfully drawn picture of the helplessness of human nature, when bereft of the virtues, and charities, and Christian graces, which God, in his infinite goodness, hath imparted to us all! No recollection of his pomp, of his riches, of his retinue, of his equipage, could be of the least possible use to the rich man *now*. It was the thought of

mercy, of compassion, entreaty, earnest and heart-breaking supplication, which possessed him wholly. In the anguish of his sufferings, he exclaims, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me!—and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue—for I am tormented in this flame." Observe, he does not ask for deliverance from his situation; he knew that *that* would be too great and too unreasonable a favour to request; but he only asks for *temporary mitigation*—for one drop of cold water to fall upon his parched and burning tongue. The reply of the Patriarch, which forms the text of my discourse, is as decisive as it is just:—a reply, which conveyed the whole law of moral retribution, upon principles which a Jew, influenced by the Mosaical dispensation, *must* have admitted to be equally logical and conclusive. "Son, (says the patriarch) remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things—but *now* he is *comforted*, and thou art *tormented*." The patriarch goes on then immediately to add—knowing the additional excitation of feeling which this reproach must have produced—and to render all further remonstrance unavailing—"and beside all

this (continues he), between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot—neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.” This intelligence at once seems to have completed the wretchedness and despair of him—who was once rich, and caressed, and courted, and flattered. Yet an emotion of fellow feeling, wrung from him in the agonising necessity of the moment, seems to have possessed him; for, finding all hope of *personal* relief unavailing, he bethinks him of his relatives and friends whom he had left behind—and whose pursuits and characters he knew bore too strong a resemblance to his own, to render such a request unappropriate. He therefore thus *again* addresses Abraham. “ I pray thee, Father, that thou wouldest send him (that is, Lazarus) to my father’s house—for I have five brethren—that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” The patriarch replies, “ they have Moses, and the prophets, let them hear *them* :” meaning thereby, God hath given your brethren all the means of conviction, which it is reasonable either for him to give, or for them to expect. If they be not blinded by an unreasonable perverse—

ness of mind, and an habitual love of sin, they cannot avoid being influenced by the Law and the Prophets. The rich man makes one further effort, and again observes—"Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they *will* repent:" thus, as it were, demanding a miracle to be wrought in favour of corrupted and sinful creatures,—whom the books of Moses, and the prophets, written by men divinely inspired, ought before to have taught and warned them of the profligacy of the course of their lives.* Abraham replies, for the last time, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." In other words, they who are not induced to live and believe, as they ought to live and believe, by those discoveries which God has made, and those commands which he has given to them in Scripture, would stand out against *any evidence whatever*; even that of a messenger, sent expressly from the other world to reform and reclaim them.

Thus ends the celebrated parable from which the text is taken: and the present illustration of it having occupied the greater

* Jortin.

portion of my discourse, I proceed, by God's assistance, to devote the remaining part to such reflections and remarks as seem naturally to grow out of it, and as may be conducive to the moral and spiritual welfare of every one here assembled.

In the first place, my brethren, whether this parable be a mere allegory, or founded upon, and mixed up with, events passing in human life, or to pass in a world to come—there can be no doubt, I think, that we are to infer from it in general, as from every part of Scripture, the doctrine of a *future state of rewards and punishments*. In the second place, the positive, moral lesson which it imparts, is equally strong and binding. The “good things” which we are to seek after in this life—are not to be those exclusively devoted to personal vanities, selfish pleasures, and worldly gratifications. There must be better things, nobler pursuits, more rational occupations, and more substantial happiness, than can possibly arise from *such* sources, if we wish to become inheritors of that wealth, which is laid up for us, inexhaustible and inconceivable, in the world which is to come. The rich man, in Scripture, is punished—not simply *because* he was *rich*—and fared sump-

uously every day—but because he did *nothing that was praiseworthy with his riches*: because he comforted not the needy, nor sustained the broken-hearted, nor assuaged the pangs of the wretched:—because he suffered the poor beggar to lie at his gate unbefriended and unheeded, the mockery of his servants, and a general object of derision: the very animals coming to perform, after their manner, those acts of mitigation of suffering, which human beings seemed, as it were, systematically to *shun*. Such a hardened wretch, as was this rich man, was no it object for the compassion of the Patriarch, and he received none.

Language could not have painted a stronger or a more natural case, than our Saviour has done in that of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Wealth, abstractedly taken, is not thereby censured by the Saviour of the world: but, knowing the natural depravity of man's heart—its proneness to selfishness, sin, and sensuality—that blessed authority hath, upon other occasions, delivered his sentiments upon the *tendency* of wealth to corrupt and undo. He says, that a camel shall more easily go through the eye of a needle, than a rich man enter into the kingdom of God—that is, a merely

rich man—with his wealth unoccupied—or unappropriated to the relief of human wants, and the benefit of the human race, according to his means and opportunity, than *such* a man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, says he “how hardly shall they, who are rich, be saved :” meaning, what *obstacles* and *difficulties*, engendered by wealth, present themselves in the way of their salvation !

In the third and last place, let us fail *not* to consider, that, whether we are rich, or whether we are poor, God equally regards and protects us : that he will more narrowly watch the former, having put into their hands instruments of doing greater good, and will exact from them a more close and rigorous account—and further, that the latter, in the most abject, and even loathsome and unbenefriended condition, are yet, in the contemplation of *his* Almighty views, deemed to be fit associates of the patriarchs of old ! In proportion, therefore, to such an illustration of the doctrine of wealth and poverty—neither the rich should fear, nor the poor despond. I say, the rich man here should *not* fear the end of the rich man in the parable, if he be determined to pursue a *different line*

of conduct : if, instead of merely personal decoration, pride, pomp, vanity, and sensuality, he cast his eye around to see who are the deserving poor and needy, and friendless, and desolate, and oppressed. If his riches occasionally, like the rains of heaven, fall in bounteous showers upon *such* objects—he may rely upon it that his own comforts will never be diminished, while his actions will be recorded in that place, where no good deed is registered in vain. It is time, therefore, to arise from the couch of sloth, of dissipation, and of luxury. If the rich man wish to establish a fame from *wealth*, let it be that which is recorded by the united praises and thanksgivings of those whose hearts he has made to sing for joy. While God Almighty hath blessed his victuals with increase, and enabled him, from a well-directed industry, and virtuously-earned prosperity, to educate his children, and administer comfort to such of his relatives and friends as may be sitting in the valley of darkness and despair, let it be the chief business of his life to express his deep and unfeigned gratitude for such mercies vouchsafed unto him : never turning his face from the laborious and deserving poor man : and never forgetting, in the plenitude of his

gratifications, the source whence his prosperity flows.

For the poor—much is there, in this parable, whereby they may take comfort to their souls. They will see, and must be convinced, that God Almighty will never forsake them—if they forsake not him, by leading an idle, a vicious, and an abandoned life. Disease is no cause of despair. Their country provides them with means of mitigation and of cure: their God regards them, should all *earthly* means fail, and human skill be vain, with that merciful eye—which will assign to them, in a future state, an habitation among those mansions where the spirits of just men, made perfect, reside.

SERMON XII.

St. JOHN, xiv. part of 21st verse.

*He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.**

THE Chapter from which these words are taken, is remarkable for the open and explicit manner in which our Saviour makes known to his disciples the relative situation between the Almighty, Himself, and his followers. A part of it has been selected by the framers of our Liturgy for the altar-service of this sacred and particular day. The whole is indeed well deserving of your closest attention; inasmuch as the sentiments contained in it were conveyed by our Saviour to his disciples under the fixed and deep impression of his being very shortly about to take leave of them. To console them, on his departure, he promises that his Father will send unto them the Holy Ghost, the COMFORTER, who

* Preached at St. Mary's, on Whitsunday, 1824.

shall teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them. That comforter—that testimony of the protection of heaven—that seal and safeguard, which was to mark the disciples as under heavenly guidance and inspiration—did, in fact, afterwards descend upon them, on the day of *Pentecost*, when they were all with one accord in one place. *How* the descent of such a Comforter was marked, has been related to you in the Epistle of the Day.

Observe, my brethren, in the outset of our enquiries, that our blessed Saviour *made good* his promise, by the descent of the Holy Spirit. There was no offer of what could not be granted; there was no hope held out, but what could be realised. Observe, also, in what a peculiar and abundant manner the comforts of the Holy Spirit were distributed—God always making the means conformable to the end proposed. These poor men, who were the humble, zealous, and sincere Disciples, or Scholars, of Christ, were to propagate the Gospel over the whole known and civilised world. But this could not be effected—without a knowledge of the several languages—spoken in the countries where this new doc—

trine was to be promulgated. The Spirit of God, therefore, descended as cloven tongues of fire—sitting upon each of them :—and they were all, in consequence, filled with the Holy Ghost, and began, as St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles tells us, to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. The multitude were, naturally enough, amazed ; and marvelled, saying one to another—“ behold are not all these Galileans ? — and how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born ?—we do hear them speak in our tongues, the wonderful works of God !!”

It was no doubt, a wonder, equally delightful and astonishing to the *Apostles*—as they must now be called—to find themselves thus gifted with the means of *making known* the extraordinary works of God :—of thus finding, that he who had promised, had performed his promise : that he, who had now ascended into heaven, was again, as it were, present, and mixed with them by the descent of his Holy Spirit : that, wheresoever they went, and whatsoever they suffered, their blessed Master and Redeemer upheld and comforted them by the infusion of his Grace—by the support of his power—and by the promises,

yet constantly imparted to them, of a happy issue out of all their afflictions, and of ultimate glory in heaven.

This prospective reward was sufficiently rich, sufficiently ample, sufficiently invigorating, for them to undergo all their afflictions: to be bruised, persecuted, and suffer martyrdom: thereby setting examples for us, in our comparatively easy and unimportant situations, to bear up, with manly fortitude, against both the lesser and greater evils of life: assured, that, as we have known Christ's commandments, we ought to keep them, and thus shew our affection for his memory, and our reverence for his precepts. If we do thus, his Holy Spirit cannot fail to be imparted to us—and will be with us even to the end.

Having thus endeavoured to elucidate the words of the text, as they are connected with the events which took place on the day of Pentecost, I purpose devoting the remainder of this Discourse, to a particular and close application of these words as they should operate upon each of us, as we journey through this life with the hope of meeting again in the kingdom of Christ.

There is not a creature gifted with the use of reason, and impressed with the importance

of Christianity, but what would express his readiness, his eagerness, his constant hope, wish and prayer, to attain to the everlasting happiness of heaven. For this, he tells us, that he braves the storms of this world: that he despises the petty machinations of the crafty and wily; and holds at defiance the threats of them who are able to kill the body, but not the soul. To such a character, then, the Preacher addresses himself, by the authority, and in the words of Christ: "You know my commandments — keep them — and my love shall never depart from you: I will be with you through life, and in death."

Upon this important injunction, seems to me to hang all the comfort, the hope, and the happiness of Christians. We must not only know—but we must keep—the commandments of our Saviour. Unless we keep them, we cannot love him: nor shall we be loved of his Father.

In the first place, then, in order that we may *keep*, let us have a *proper* knowledge, of Christ's commandments. Not a partial, prejudiced, and self-flattering knowledge: but a sound and radical comprehension of them. When a skilful and subtle disputant addressed himself to our Saviour, in order

that he might know what path he was to pursue to inherit eternal life, what said the great Teacher to him, in reply? Ye know the Commandments. How readest thou?—and our Saviour afterwards recapitulated them. The Disputant declared he had known these from his youth up; and after hearing from our Saviour the memorable illustration of whom he was to consider as his Neighbour, he is told to *do* these things, and he shall *live*.

Many are the causes, my brethren, which prevent even a thorough *knowledge* of the duties of Christianity, and the commandments of its founder. We are passionate, and we dislike to have our anger controlled: we know that we are in the habit of uttering oaths: of saying Racha, and Fool, and of thereby incurring the danger of eternal punishment: we naturally, therefore, turn with willingness from, or look with indifference upon, that beautiful and appropriate code of laws, which teaches us to let our yea be yea, and our nay, nay. Again; we are revengeful—without considering that vengeance belongeth to the Lord of the Universe: or, we are prying with curious eye into the failings of our acquaintance, and reprobating perhaps the vices of our friends—when we forget how


our own eyesight is dimmed by the follies or crimes which beset us. We are ready to remove the mote which obscures the discernment of our brother, but forget the frightful beam which disfigures our own eye: And in regard to neighbourly compassion, and true christian charity—we are willing to aid those, to speak well of those, who, upon general topics, agree with ourselves; but *heresy* and *wickedness* become synonymous terms when we find the least deviation from what we *conceive* to be strict propriety; and would rather offer, if I may so speak, the luxuries of nutrition to the human being who *professes only* to think and act as *we* think and act, than throw even a garment upon the naked and wounded body of him, who has *differed* in thought and conduct from ourselves.

God, in his infinite mercy, at the great day of retributive justice, take pity upon such, who have thus shewn pity upon their fellow creatures! Most miserably doth that man deceive himself, and endanger the safety of his own soul, who imagines that inferences, like the foregoing, form the *tests* of his knowledge of the commandments of Christ. He who prayed even for his *murderers*, will

never love, or be with, that man, who doth not, in principle and in action, *think* all the good, and do all the good, in his power, to the whole human race: and this exercise of goodness cannot in the least change, or retract from, his own fixed principles, and notions of right and wrong, be they what they may!

Let us, then, begin the task of learning and knowing Christ's commandments, as Christ *himself* wished them to be learnt and known:—considering ourselves rather in the light of simple scholars, than subtle commentators: not substituting the capricious impulses of a heated imagination, for the calm, clear, and irrefragable conclusions deducible from the law of God. Let us come to such a task with the simplicity of children: with hearts touched and penetrated with a sense of the mercy and goodness of our heavenly father: who wishes not that a single soul should perish, but rather that all “should be converted and live,” should be collected within the fold of his dear Son.

In the second place, supposing us to possess this clear and unclouded knowledge of the commandments of Christ—and anxious to be in the full possession of his love and protection—let us see that we put in *practice*



what we *know*: that we not only exclaim "Lord, Lord," but that we "do the will" of our Heavenly Father.

The duties of Christianity are wisely apportioned to the reward resulting from the practice of them. The means and end exactly correspond. To promise the perpetual happiness of heaven to supine and indifferent mortals, who had only to open their lips and not their hearts, would seem a most disproportionate adaptation of the end to the means. The case, therefore, is by no means thus. We are called upon to act—to be resolute and unwearied in well doing—to imitate, on a smaller scale, the exertions of those Apostles, who, on the day of Pentecost, were filled with the Holy Spirit, and enabled to disseminate christianity to the most civilised quarters of the globe. If we persevere in such a calling, we shall, beyond doubt, continue to receive portions of the same spirit, which will enable *us* to bear up against the crosses and disappointments of life. The kindness of providence is yet as visible as it was of old, although miracles have ceased to operate. The truth of christianity is so firmly established—the tenets of it are so palpable, and the importance of it so manifest, that men are

required only to *live up* to the instruction which it imparts—to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before their Maker. A fixed faith is known by its fruits. No season, period, or crisis, is free from the operation of the Holy Spirit of God, although that spirit be not manifested in cloven tongues of fire. When infidelity, scepticism, and apostacy rise up to assail us on one side, there are the words of wisdom, of soberness and truth, to combat such attacks on the other. The hearts of the wise and good are operated upon, by the Comforter, to stem the torrent of such perfidiousness; and to prove, by their seasonable and salutary admonitions, that “the words of the Lord are pure words—even as the silver, which from the earth is tried and purified seven times in the fire.” But however zealous may be our opinions, professions, and even prayers, yet if we *only* think, profess, and pray, we make no progress in the great cause of christian salvation. While time flies on, while life is our own, let us devote both to the glory and praise of God, by shewing peace and good-will towards men.

In conclusion :—we are told that, as by so doing we shall shew our *love to Christ*, so shall we be—*loved of his Father*.

Here is the end and crown of all our labours. Like the peace of God, so the love of God passes all understanding. It will be our bulwark, and our boast; our shield of safety, and our anchor of security. All the figurative expressions of our language, inculcating and illustrating this idea, may be collected to give force to its beauty and importance. Unless God love us, unless we live impressed with a conviction of being his children, and that he constantly careth for us—all the beauties of creation, and all the solace of society, present themselves to us in vain. The flowers cease to be fragrant; the covert no longer yields its shade; there is neither verdure in the forest, nor salubrity in the air; man ceases to delight, or instruct; the lute and harp yield no pleasing sounds; and the temple of worship is **DESOLATE**—if we are *conscious* of living in this world without love of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There can be no substitute for such privation. We can no more hope to move to and fro without the knowledge of the Deity, than we can expect to receive comfort from man, or be freed by our Maker. Our secret fears, our

inward hopes and wishes, our moments of privacy and meditation, are all embittered by a consciousness that, though we have had the *knowledge*, we have not exhibited the *practice*, of the commandments of Christ. We neither love him, nor does our Father, in consequence, extend his affection to us.

Disconsolate, indeed, is that christian who lives under such impressions!—but having had the road clearly pointed out to him, the fault is surely his own—the wickedness falls upon his own head—if he hath ceased to walk therein.

Far from each of us be such a fallacious line of conduct. Let us, on the contrary, live assured of God's love: of his Holy spirit yet being imparted to us; in consequence of our having both *known* and *kept* commandments. However important be the duties of christianity, no one can deny that they are plain, explicit, and practicable. We have, if we choose to exert it, both the power to *act*, as well as to *understand*. Our heavenly Father will not fail to shower down his blessing in proportion to our exertions; and happy is he, who, at the close of a life, long and actively engaged in fulfilling the precepts of Christ,

is conscious, that the Spirit of his Maker, which has comforted him in all his trials and afflictions, sustains him, now dying—and will quickly transport him where his Saviour and the Apostles have gone before to receive him, and to crown him with “an exceeding great reward.”

SERMON XIII.

ST. LUKE xviii. 10.

*Two men went up into the Temple to pray ;
the one a Pharisee, and the other a Pub-
lican.**

THESE words form the commencement of a parable which Jesus spake to certain, who trusted in *themselves* that they were *righteous*. The parable, which has been repeated to you in the course of the day, is as follows: “Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself—God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess. And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying,

* Preached at St. Mary's, June 5, 1824.

“ God be merciful to me, a sinner !” “ I tell you,” continues our Saviour, “ this man went down to his house justified rather than the other — for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

A more beautiful and more forcible illustration of the folly of pride, and of the wisdom of humility, has never been presented to the observation of man. Like all the discourses and parables of our Saviour, the present is remarkable for that conciseness and perspicuity of narration, and that justness and brilliancy of colouring, which not only bespeak unusual powers in the author, but which strike the hearer with irresistible conviction of its truth. That I may render this very interesting subject as much deserving of your attention as I am able, I purpose, first, to describe the object which our Saviour had in view when he made the narrative. Secondly, To give you some idea of the subject matter itself; of the general character of the Pharisees and Publicans; and, thirdly and lastly, to draw such inferences from the whole as may help to regulate our conduct towards God in prayer, and towards our fellow creatures in our intercourse with the world.

First, then, as to the *object* which our Saviour had in view—and this was, as he himself informs us, as a caution to certain people who trusted in *themselves* that they were righteous. Of all denominations of people, at the time of our Saviour's appearing upon earth, the Pharisees were, as we shall presently find, the most self confident and presuming on their own merits and excellences. But great as might have been *their* presumption, it is to be feared that many of us, at the present day, are not altogether exempt from a similar imputation. Many there be who trust wholly in themselves—who arrogantly rely on their own supposed splendid actions and charities: and who mistake a punctual compliance with certain exterior duties, for a faithful discharge of positive Christian virtues; for humility, confession of errors and of sins, and a serious, unfeigned, and entire resignation to the will of heaven. It is, indeed, to be feared that the present times are not altogether exempt from the Pharisaical tribe. How often does our experience of human nature, as we see it in the complex and ever-shifting occurrences of life, make us acquainted with actions and characters, in which all the absurdity and provoking insolence of

the Jewish Pharisee of old are manifested! There be those who talk largely of their splendour and pomp, and display of exterior duties, in which, while they *know* that they are merely gratifying their own vanities and weaknesses, will *tell* you, that they are, more effectually, serving God and their fellow creatures. All this might serve their turn, and the purpose very well, if, unfortunately for themselves, that same God did not know the shallowness of their conceits, the emptiness of their boastings, and the odious insincerity of their confessions. Such men may deceive *us*—but most certain and unequivocal it is, they cannot deceive their Maker : with whom they will have the great and final account to settle at the last day of retributive justice. Such, therefore, will do well to ponder on this parable, and deserting their former professions, to abide religiously by those of the Publican.

Let us now proceed, secondly, to an illustration of the subject matter. “ Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican.” In the Temple there were two courts ; one for the Jews, the other for the Gentile proselytes that lived among them ; and to the first court

the Pharisee went—to the second the Publican retired, to pray. No one is supposed to be present. God alone hears their supplications: when the Pharisee, as if fearing to be polluted by the touch, or even contiguity, of the Publican, thus pours forth his pompous and self-gratulatory strains to the throne of heaven. “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as yonder base, submissive Publican. Thou knowest, Lord, that I regularly fast twice in the week—on those days when thy laws are read in the holy Synagogue; and, in opposition to the rapine and injustice of others, I am punctually faithful in the payment of tithes towards the support of the sacred priests; and instead of the luxury and adultery of others, I keep under my body by fasting.” So prayed the Pharisee. So prayed this arrogant, self-sufficient, and yet (unknown to himself, the whole time) base, wretched, carnal-minded, contemptible human creature. And so prays many a Pharisee of the present day: separating himself, in his own conceit, from the common lot of mortality; and substituting the impulses of a proud and cankered spirit, for the aspirations of a broken and contrite heart. But what

was the *Publican's* form of prayer? Of what self purity, of what punctuality in the discharge of his duties, does *he* boast? and what is *his* opinion of his companion in prayer? Not a single consideration of this nature obtrudes on his thoughts. He knows he is before his God—and that all boasting is impiety. He trembles to dwell on the remembrance of his past life; convinced, that, weighed in the scale of Almighty perfection, it is but as dust in the balance. He therefore stands afar off—retired within himself—resigned to the will of heaven. Abased, dejected, prostrate, and penitent, he will not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smiting upon his breast, breathes out the trembling, pious prayer, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” These different prayers are perfect pictures of the different characters of each tribe, and of which I purpose now presenting you with a brief outline.

The Pharisees were the most distinguished, popular, and flourishing sect among the Jews. This name they assumed, on account of their *separating* themselves (the original word denoting *separation*) to superior strictness in religious observances. They affected great mortification and abstraction from the world:

imposed upon themselves frequent stated fasts, which they solemnised with all the formal austerities that superstition could invent; made long prayers at the corners of crowded streets, to attract the eyes of the passing multitude, and cause themselves to be admired and venerated as mirrors of sanctity and devotedness to God. They disfigured their faces that they might *appear* to men to fast. They macerated their bodies with penal inflictions and abstinence, charged their features with gloom and solemnity, sounded a trumpet before them, to give public notice when they would distribute alms; paraded about the market and places of public concourse in long flowing robes, feasting on the incense and fulsome applause of the gazing vulgar.* According to our Saviour's representation of them, they were a race of the most consummate hypocrites that ever disgraced human nature; for, under this specious mask of religion and piety, lurked the most abandoned and atrocious vices. The same great authority compares them to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear clean and wholesome, but which inwardly are full of putrefaction and horror. He also brands

* Jortin.

them with making clean the *outside* of the cup and platter, while the *inside* was polluted with rapaciousness, intemperance, and all manner of iniquity. They are stigmatised, too, as devouring widows' houses ; and, with unfeeling cruelty, depriving the orphan and widow of their just property : and yet, under this abominable system of rapacity and perfidy, making long prayers in the most solemn manner, and with every exterior pomp—thus covering, says one of our ablest divines,* private scenes of the blackest wickedness with the fair and showy veil of religion. Such, and worse even than this delineation makes them, were the *Pharisees*. Can you therefore, my brethren, be surprised that a character of such a cast should prefer a prayer of so presumptuous a nature as the one before described? “ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” The lips of such a man must have been equally contaminated with his principles. No wonder therefore that he should come forward with a bold and unblushing demeanor, and without tremor, humilty, or one single petition for the pardon of his manifold offences, should immediately begin thanking his God and Judge for having

* The Same.

made him so spotless and enviable a character — for having placed him above all the meanness and vileness, which he obliquely throws upon his fellow supplicant in prayer.

No wonder that a consideration of powers, of a merely temporary nature, and perhaps as accidental as they were unmerited, should inflate the breast, and render callous the heart, of the boastful and self-presuming *Pharisee*. No wonder that, with this estimator of intrinsic worth by external condition and pomp, such feelings should be entertained, such professions made, and such a prayer poured forth at the throne of Almighty God! Now, on the other hand, we do not find, from the Holy Scriptures, that the Publicans were remarkable for any heinousness of conduct. On the contrary, our Saviour sometimes sat at meat with them ; and was reproved for it by those who knew not the enlarged principles of that scale of salvation, by which all mankind was to be gathered together under the shadow of his healing wings. But we are now to dwell a little on this fellow supplicant, and to describe *his* sect or profession.

The Publicans, according to the import of the original word, were Collectors or renters of the taxes, or public revenues. They

were distinguished among the Romans into two classes, the superior and inferior. The superior, or principal collectors, throughout the Roman empire, were of the *Equestrian* order, or *Roman Knights*. But it appears that the Publicans, mentioned in the Gospels, were mostly *Jews*—of the inferior kind: forming revenue officers under the control of the Equestrian Publicans. Zaccheus, however, although a Jew, is called a *Chief Publican*; which seems to denote that he rented some part of the public revenues for himself, and had inferior collectors or publicans under him. And there is little doubt of St. Matthew being of one this sect or profession; for we find that he was particularly called by our Saviour while *sitting* at the receipt of custom: that is, as all the Commentators allow, while receiving the *tributary payment of taxes*.

Having thus described to you the character of the sect of both Pharisee and Publican, you will be better enabled to form an opinion of the respective prayers they preferred: and this brings me, thirdly and lastly, to draw such inferences from the whole, as may regulate our conduct towards God, and towards man.

From the vain boastings of the Pharisee,

may you ever be exempt in your prayers and supplications before the throne of mercy! Pride not yourselves on any little advantage, even if you should possess it, over other of your fellow creatures ; for, think not only how many in this world may be better than you are—but how far, even the most perfect, have fallen short of the glory of God. Every time that we prostrate ourselves in this place of divine worship, our liturgy very wisely teaches us to declare that we have left *un-done* those things which we ought to have *done* ; and have done those which we ought *not* to have done : that there is no health in us : and that, so far from enumerating our *good qualities*, we call on God to spare all those who *confess* their *faults*. Moreover, we supplicate him to deal not with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities: This, it must be confessed, is somewhat different from the vain presumptuous boasting of those who trust in themselves that they are righteous. And although the frequent recurrence of these forms of prayer, in our most excellent Liturgy, renders them, in some minds, of less avail, yet we should do well to ponder on them, to apply their force and meaning to ourselves, and

our respective conditions ; and every time we repeat them, to abstract ourselves from those surrounding objects which are wont to lead astray our treacherous thoughts. In one sense, or point of view, let us imitate both Pharisee and Publican. Let us resort to the Temple, or the House of God, to pray ; and, above all, let us remember, when there, that it is prayer and penitence alone which can lead to pardon : which can make us go down to our houses, or return to our homes, justified, much better than if we had *only* listened with attention to the preacher's exhortation. Imitate therefore, I beseech you, the humble attitude, and pious ejaculation, of the Publican. Consider, you stand immediately before your MAKER. Would you, when about to make a request of your *Monarch* for some donation which would add largely to your temporal advantage, suffer your attention to be diverted by any trivial, unmeaning object, and thus betray a want of decency and respect towards your Sovereign ? It may, I think, be taken for granted that you would not act in so absurd and inconsistent a manner. What, then!—can you reconcile yourself to trifle with your Almighty Creator, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords !? Can you, when

asking for such blessings as may lead to eternal life and eternal happiness, conduct yourself in a listless, indifferent, and offensive manner? Instead of the sighing of that contrite heart, which the Publican appears to have possessed, will you, like the Pharisee, thank God that you are not as other men are? No true and sincere Christian will thus rush into the presence of his Redeemer: will thus, with all the weight of original sin pressing upon his heart, breathe out his unhallowed petitions.

How infinite the space between God and man! How vast and merciful the views of the one, how contracted and severe the thoughts of the other. But blessings innumerable wait on him, who, on a thorough examination of his own heart, and a conviction of its depravity, lays open his inmost, secret, thoughts before divine mercy: and lowly bending on his knees, and smiting on his breast, exclaims, "God be merciful to me a sinner! My sins are many, and can only be washed away by the blood shedding of thy crucified son. O Lord, I know not what I should ask of thee. Thou only knowest what are my wants; and Thou lovest me better than I can love myself. Give me, thy ser-

vant, what is necessary, whatsoever it may be. I dare not ask for either crosses, or consolations. All that I should do is, to present myself before Thee : to lay open my heart to Thee. Behold my wants, which are many, but with which I am unacquainted : yet, only behold, and do according to thy mercy. Smite, or heal—depress, or raise me up. I adore all thy purposes without knowing them. I have nothing to say in my own behalf. Take me in sacrifice. I entirely abandon myself to Thee. I have no more any desire, but to accomplish thy will. Lord, teach me to pray—and pray thou Thyself in me !”*

That our hearts and hands may always be lifted up under the impression of such, or similar sentiments—and that we may, in consequence, by leading a life conformably to such pious entreaties, be admitted finally to bow down at His footstool—and, with the four and twenty Elders join, night and day, in the heavenly hallelujah of praise, gratitude, and thanksgiving—God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake, and through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

* Vide Fenelon's Pious Reflections.

SERMON XIV.

ST. JOHN vi. 67th and 68th verses.

*Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.**

IT has been remarked by ingenious and learned annotators upon the New Testament, that, however precise and pertinent are all the observations therein contained—however they may impress us with a lofty idea of the wisdom of our Saviour, and of the immense importance of christian salvation—however they may inculcate, in purity and force of language, precepts the most useful for the regulation of human affairs and of human passions—yet, throughout the four gospels we have no express declaration of the *manner* in which certain truths were declared by our Saviour:

* Preached at St. Mary's, June 20, 1824.

of the energy of enunciation, and of the expression of countenance and gesture, which sometimes, perhaps, would have accompanied the delivery of certain answers and injunctions! Calmness, dignity, and persuasion, were probably the leading features of his matchless eloquence. He would not, as Moses did, have dashed in pieces the table upon which the spiritual law of the New Testament was engraved—in order to evince the violence of his indignation. No! he, who was led to the slaughter like the lamb which openeth not his mouth—would not perhaps have acted thus violently: but his rebukes and his reprimands must have had an equally piercing effect. *His* was the eloquence which not only subdued the subtle logic of the member of the Sanhedrim (Nicodemus), but convinced and confounded the prejudiced and turbulent multitude.

I am led to make these preliminary remarks, from a consideration of the peculiarly energetic manner with which the words of the text were most probably delivered. The circumstances which led to them were these.

Many had *professed* themselves to be the Disciples of our Saviour—many, besides the twelve who were afterwards emphatically

called the Apostles. A *Disciple* was one, who wished to *learn* and become thoroughly acquainted with Christ's tenets in order to put them rigidly in practice. An *Apostle* was one, who had not only shewn the requisite qualifications of a scholar or learner, but who, in consequence of such qualifications, was emphatically distinguished as being *sent* from Christ himself to inculcate his doctrines into others : to teach as he had been taught ; and to instruct as he had been instructed. An Apostle, therefore, was a disciple of the higher order under our Saviour, and was to be considered as a scholar of tried experience and fidelity.

Now many, as was just observed, had professed themselves to be the *disciples* of our Lord. To these, our Saviour, as it was the duty of a master to make his scholars thoroughly acquainted with all the points of his doctrine, explained the relative situation between God, his father, and himself: himself and his followers. The verses preceding the text are an illustration of this subject ; and we are told at the 59th verse that "he said these things in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum."

He had no sooner finished, than the weak

character of his followers began speedily to betray itself. Many of his disciples when they heard this, said, "this is an hard saying; who can bear it?" Here, my brethren, is a strong picture of the gross selfishness of human nature. As long as our passions and prejudices are flattered—as long as our vanities and weaknesses are encouraged—in fact, as long as we find the corruption of human nature is not to be subdued by the workings of a pure spiritual feeling, and the precepts of the world not to be rooted out by the injunctions of the gospel—as long as we hear doctrine, or receive advice of this soothing nature, so long do we find it an *easy* and a *pleasant* thing; but, when the moral teacher or spiritual pastor, in imitation of his great Lord and Master Jesus Christ, inculcates doctrines of a different nature, and bids us put aside the sin that so easily and fatally besets us—we then reply, in the words of Christ's followers, "this is an hard saying, who can bear it?"

To return however to the verses connected with my text. "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this *offend* you?" and then observing in a summary, but very forcible manner, that they must sacrifice the lusts of the

flesh to the wants of the spirit, if they wished to prove themselves to be his *true* and *faithful* followers,—we are told that “many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

Amazed, and stung as it were to the soul, at such base and cowardly conduct, our Saviour naturally turned round to those on whom he thought he could confidently rely:—and with a look, expressive no doubt of keen disappointment yet most ardent hope, he says to the twelve, “Will YE also go away?”

What power of reasoning and of eloquence was there in this question! An appeal is made at once to the hearts of those whose fidelity he wishes to put to the test:—as much as if he had said, “be it so: let these shallow hearers and lukewarm adherents to my cause, go where it pleases them; where they may ripen in their follies and their sins—but I have *here* a source of consolation and succour. My faithful *Disciples* will not surely act thus?” Then Jesus said unto the twelve, “Will *ye* also go away?”

The question, so strong a rebuke upon those backsliders who had just deserted him, seems to have fired the always ardent mind of St. Peter: who, perhaps, pressing forward

in front of the twelve, and kneeling down with clasped hands, exclaimed, "Lord to *whom* shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life! And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Having thus endeavoured to give you as lively a representation as I could, of the probable circumstances attending the delivery of the words of my text, I now purpose, by God's assistance, to draw such inferences from them as may be applicable to ourselves; and may teach us, not only how scandalous a thing it is to desert those, whom we have taught to *confide* in us, but how ruinous it will be to our soul's welfare to desert HIM "who hath the words of eternal life."

In the first place, like the treacherous disciples who eventually betrayed their Master, we all set out in life with professing ourselves to be *Christians*. We have been baptised in this faith—and it is expected of us that we should make good, as we grow up in stature and in wisdom, the solemn vows that our God-fathers and God-mothers have made, in our names, at the baptismal font. God Almighty hears and regards these vows, although perhaps they are not in general much regarded by those who make them. We attend therefore the

service of the church: but we find, as our intellects become matured, the doctrine of salvation "a hard thing to hear"—that is, we are unwilling to hear it at the expense of sacrificing all the follies and absurdities that beset us. We fall back in consequence, and we desert our master. In short, however we may wish to persuade ourselves, or others, of the contrary, we are not the disciples of Christ. It is a mockery of what he hath said, and done, and suffered, to suppose, that he can call *us* his faithful and true scholars, or disciples, when almost every action of our lives is a violation of his laws. Let this however be considered, not the conduct of yourselves but of others, *strangers* to this place of worship. You are, or you imagine *yourselves*, to be, really and faithfully his disciples. Deserted by others, the Saviour of the world says to *you*, in the solemn language of the text, "Will *ye* also go away?"

Now, the answer to this impressive question lies not in the breast of the pastor, but in the bosoms and consciences of the flock which he addresses. It is for each of you, as you have known and understood the precepts of christianity, to say, whether you have correctly and unremittingly put these pre-

cepts into practice. And here, the preacher is bound to declare that, if, in all our actions, in all our thoughts, and in all our professions, we have not uniformly shewn a spirit of meekness, of sincerity, and of benevolence—if a wish to subdue the stormy passions, and to cease practising the secret sins, to which mortality is at all times too prone, doth not evince itself in our thoughts and actions—if the cultivation of humility and of a forgiving disposition—if the strenuous endeavour to relieve the distressed according to our means, be not displayed in our conduct—if an unqualified surrender to God of all the affections and lusts of the flesh—and if, after all, a confession of our *unworthiness* to obtain everlasting happiness from our *merits*, without an exclusive reliance upon those of our Saviour—form not a leading principle in our lives—then, however we may wish to persuade ourselves of a contrary conclusion, we are not, in truth, the genuine disciples of Christianity ; and if our Saviour ask us, in the language of the gospel, as he personally asked the twelve, “will ye also go away ?” we can have nothing to say in confirmation of our abiding with him, or in defence of our desertion of him. We are not, in fact, followers of the doctrines of Christ,

and have no pretensions to be his disciples. The heinousness of, and the eventual punishment for, this dereliction of our principles and professions are sufficiently pointed out in scripture—and it remains with you to examine yourselves truly, whether your lives have been so led, as to be in unison with such a representation of a good life as has been just now laid before you.

In the next place, let us see what can possibly be the *motive* of, or the *reward* for this desertion, if indeed we are guilty of it. To *whom* can we go, when St. Peter tells us “that CHRIST alone hath the words of eternal life!” All change is effected with the expectation expressed, or implied, of being *benefited* by such change. Now, if we desert our Lord and Master, to whom, as conferring more exalted privileges, or more exquisite happiness, to whom shall we fly? Recollect, when we desert God for Man, or forfeit heaven for earth, our soul is inevitably endangered; and what, I ask, shall a man give “in exchange for his own soul?” But the scripture, you will remark, is filled “with hard sayings to hear:” the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of human life, hold out more soothing encouragements, and an immediate gratifi-

cation of human vanity and passions. Be it so. Fly, O man, to this seductive world! and intoxicated with its enchantments, cast not one thought upon thy crucified Redeemer—and bury in oblivion all he hath done for thy everlasting happiness in heaven. Perhaps thou hast lost ONE whom thou wouldst wish to *meet again?* Will the *world* restore this object to thee? Perhaps thou art overwhelmed with thy cares and misfortunes—and fanciest that *man* may lend a pitying ear to thy complaints, which *heaven* hath not yet vouchsafed to remove? Who will succour and sooth thee in the world?—The proud will scorn thee; the captious will taunt at thee; the jealous will fear thee; and the avaricious will push thee from his threshold. There is no couch upon which thou canst recline—there is no receptacle to receive thy wearied limbs—like thy Redeemer, thou hast not where to lay thy head. Return, wretched outcast! and retread the path which hath led thee astray: bend the stubborn knee, and confess the pride of thy heart, and the insolence of thy hopes! Seek him whom thou hast betrayed, while he is yet to be found; ask for forgiveness, and thou shalt obtain it—and *then* shalt thou exclaim with the Apostle, in the words of my text, “Lord to

whom shall we go—THOU hast the words of eternal life?”

God grant that proper feelings like these may possess us, on repentance of our errors, and on returning to that gracious Redeemer, whose words are the words of everlasting life: who is unceasingly exhorting us to approach him; and who carries in his paternal bosom every lamb that wanders from his fold!

May we never have to reproach ourselves with this dereliction of our Master and Redeemer; or, if we have been guilty of it, let us hasten to return to him while he may be found; and to declare instantly and unfeignedly how grievous and intolerable has been the burden of our offences. Recollect, inasmuch as a parent expects the fidelity and support of his children—inasmuch as one friend looks to another friend for consolation and sympathy in his acutest mental afflictions—even so doth our Almighty Father and Saviour, who is our *best*, and oftentimes our *only* parent and friend, look to us for a steady reliance upon his efforts, and an unqualified obedience to his commands. Between man and his *Maker* the tie is strong, and should be indissoluble; and it is in vain that *he* can expect protection and fidelity from a human being, who has

frequently, if not uniformly, violated the oaths of supremacy to God!

Let us not, in conclusion, place the soothing unction of flattery to our souls—and imagine that heaven can never be offended at the offering up a sacrifice, where the lips only, and not the heart, is exercised. At the last awful day of retributive justice, if our Saviour should demand of us, whether *we* (who have professed ourselves to be in truth his disciples) have ever through life deserted him, like thousands of our fellow creatures, what, my brethren, *should* be our answer to such a momentous question?!

“Lord, to whom, but to **THEE** could we go for comfort and support, in our troubles and adversities whensoever they oppressed us? **THOU** only wert the sure hope that animated our souls; and, like the immovable star to the midnight mariner, on the trackless ocean, thou hast guided us in safety through all the tempests of life! Thou wert our rock of defence, and our shield of safety. Thy existence, like thy word, is eternal. Whom in heaven have we but thee, and in the world there was none that we desired in comparison of thee. As we have thus lived, as we have ever clung to **THEE** in every peril and disaster

and temptation, so, gracious Lord, grant us the enjoyment of thy kingdom, and to sit down at thy right hand where there are pleasures for ever more."

SERMON XV.

LUKE xv. 21.

*father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.**

OF all the beautiful and pathetic tales which have been transmitted to us, as descriptive of youthful prodigality and youthful repentance, there is none perhaps that more irresistibly commands our attention, and interests our feelings, than THAT from which my text is taken. It is so well known to you, from the frequency of perusal, and the variety of illustration which it has received from eminent expounders of Holy Writ, that I cannot expect to add any thing of novelty or of force upon the subject. But claiming your earnest attention, I shall proceed to explain a narrative from which so much important instruc-

* Preached at St. Mary's, June 27, 1824.

tion is to be derived, as affecting the cause both of morality and religion. In the present instance, the subject comes very opportunely under discussion—because, in a late Discourse, I took occasion to dwell on the duties of Parents to Children; I shall now, therefore, make the parable subservient to an illustration of the duties of *Children towards Parents*.

First, let us repeat the parable in the simple and touching words of the Evangelist, and make our occasional remarks as the events described may suggest. And, Secondly, let us apply the great and general conclusion, to be drawn from the whole narrative to our situation, as it respects the World and the Almighty.

The parable is as follows. “ A certain man had two sons : and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.” Benevolent, and ready to shew how cheerfully he complied with the wishes of his dear children, the Father does not hesitate; nor does he argue on the precipitancy, nay, indecency of the request : but, as a fond and indulgent parent, he satisfies the young man’s desire, and apportions to him *his* share of parental property.

Elated and intoxicated at the fulfilment of his wishes, “not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.” Thoughtless of the future, and unmindful of his distance from his father’s roof, he made no provision for the morrow. The riot of to-day—the enjoyment of the present moment—was all he sought and took delight in. But extravagance without foresight, and dissipation void of reflection, afford but momentary and insufficient happiness. “When this young man had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.” And *now* the bitter moment, which he had ridiculed and set at defiance, arrived. Now was his body pinched by want, and his mind tortured and distracted how he should procure a subsistence. In this extremity, “he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.” Little did he dream, in his rapturous moments of prosperity—in his licentious revellings with his companions—of such a reverse as this! We may suppose that the citizen, with whom he joined himself, saw, from his emaciated frame, but more, from his

general ignorance of all kinds of business and useful pursuits, that he was *unfit* for any *worthier* occupation, and accordingly he sent him into his fields to feed swine, and to procure sustenance from the food which was common to the cattle. Alas! what would have been the feelings of a fond and virtuous parent, on seeing the child, who was wont perhaps to drink of his cup, and to sleep in his bosom, thus a wanderer, a beggar, and a refuse among the swine of a stranger! So piercing were *now* the calls of hunger, and so welcome would have been *any* species of nutriment, “that he fain would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.”

He was now perhaps at the last stage of human wretchedness: but (observe with what exquisite beauty the narrative proceeds) the moment of *bodily anguish* became the moment of *mental reflection*. He began to wonder what had reduced him to such a dreadful state. His senses became awakened: a recollection of the past, painted to him, in frightful colours, his present deplorable condition. He found that he had a father whom he had before forgotten—and a home which he had hitherto despised. “And when he

came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have *bread enough*, and to *spare*, and I perish with hunger!!

How forcible, and yet how natural was this reflection—wrung from him in all the agony of heart-touching misery! The thought no sooner possesses him, than he exclaims, "I will arise and *go* to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." This, my brethren, was the wise resolution of a young man, in whose heart, depraved as it might have been, the genuine sparks of virtue and filial affection were not yet *quite* extinguished. "And he arose and came to his father." Conceive with what alacrity he would quit a scene so odious and disgusting: judge of the alternate flutterings of shame, and hope, and fear, which must have agitated his distracted mind! "But when he was yet a great way off, his good and gracious father (who had been long pining perhaps in solitude once more to behold his poor, wandering, disobedient son, and to bless him in his aged arms before death should close his eyes) this father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and

and kissed him." The son, however, was not unmindful of his intended declaration and confession. He threw himself at his father's feet: and, perhaps, bathing them with his tears, unreservedly exclaimed in the words of my text—"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Melted with parental tenderness, the father is no longer able to constrain himself, or conceal his feelings. He thinks no more of the disobedience of his son. He forgives, as he presses him to his heart. The sight of such filial contrition—of such frank declaration of error—and of such earnest supplication for pardon—subdues all the severe resolutions he might have formed; and, turning to his servants, he exclaims, in the unbounded transport of his soul, "Bring forth the *best robe* and put it on him—and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it—and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found."

The remaining part of this narrative, relating to the elder brother, although it exhibits an equally nice discrimination into human

nature, and affords a very substantial lesson from which the envious, illiberal, and unforgiving, may receive much salutary instruction—yet, as not necessarily connected with the foregoing matter, and as, if now illustrated, it would extend this Discourse to an unusual length—the remainder of the narrative must, in consequence, be omitted.

But from *that* portion of the parable as already detailed to you, what obvious, interesting, and important remarks may be made! These remarks, I reserve, agreeably to my former proposition, for the second and latter part of the Discourse. They relate to our duties towards God and man. And, first, as respecting man—or rather, our Parents. Does not the conduct of both the father and the prodigal evince unbounded goodness on the one hand, and unrestrained dissipation, followed by bitter contrition, on the other? Let us hence learn not to urge extravagant or indecent requests on a parent, who knows so much better how to act of himself for our benefit, without our romantic schemes and ridiculous entreaties. Let us not be precipitate to acquire wealth before we know its proper use; how to spend it with prudence and judgment. And, above all, let us not, if

a fond, indulgent parent, should grant our request—merely that we may see from our own experience how absurdly it was founded—let us not, when absent from home, out of the personal observation though not of the remembrance of the parent, devote it to unmanly and illicit pursuits. Novelty is not happiness. When parted from the roof under which he has been cradled, does it necessarily follow that the young man shall taste of bliss, purer and more permanent than that he has before enjoyed? Gracious God!—how many, who, like the Prodigal Son in the parable, have been impatient to possess hereditary wealth, and unbounded and unprincipled in its application—how many, who have “wasted that substance with riotous living” which was dearly and honestly earned by parental industry—and have at last, shivering with cold, and hunger, and nakedness, passed by the dwellings of luxury and dissipation, wherein they were formerly used to be welcomed how many, I say, are *now* perishing with hunger, while hired servants in their father’s house have bread enough, and to spare?!

Should there be any one present, now hearing me, who meditates a desertion from

home, let him not forget the consequences which will ensue ; consequences, which the parable has described. They will assuredly overtake him : they will suddenly dash the cup of pleasure from his lips, and sink his forlorn heart into the deepest gulph of infamy and woe. Let such a one, on the contrary, cleave unremittingly to the home of his father : let him partake of that bodily and mental nourishment which is prepared by parental foresight, and sweetened by parental solicitude. Let him see and be convinced (as he assuredly will) that those ties which God hath planted, as the most sacred and indissoluble in our nature, are not easily to be snapt asunder by the revellings of the profligate, or the mockeries of the profane. We may bury, for a few moments, all recollection of our beloved parents in the debaucheries of new scenes and new associates ; but, when “ we come to ourselves ” (to borrow the strong language of Scripture) we shall assuredly “ rise and go to our father—and declare unto him our unworthiness of being called his son.”

Thus much for the lesson which this parable teaches in regard to our conduct towards our Parents. A higher lesson is incul-

cated as it respects our thoughts and actions towards God. In considering these, we may close the subject of the Discourse.

My brethren, the FATHER in the parable is the *Saviour of Mankind* : indulgent, merciful, and affectionate : who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. The dissipated character of the younger son is, I fear, a too faithful picture of the generality of *Ourselves*. Conscious of the weaknesses of human nature—impatient of the restraint which were imposed by the Jewish rites and ceremonies—we seemed, in the conduct of our forefathers, to have petitioned heaven for some relief from such overpowering burdens. Not that our merits demanded this relief, but that the Almighty, like the father in the parable, is always swift to shew mercy. His only Son is sent down from heaven : the poor have the Gospel preached unto them : and there is salvation from Sion offered to the whole human race. At first, we rush with avidity to partake of such a stupendous act of immeasurable and inconceivable benevolence : but we soon *abuse* the indulgence granted. We become vain, or riotous, or wanton, or wicked : we forget the gracious hand which

showered down such mercies : we turn our backs upon the author and finisher of our faith. Now mark the result.

We mix largely with the world—with the foolish, or profane, or profligate. We fancy nothing can exceed the happiness resulting from such an intercourse : but, as we cannot command uninterrupted health, or freedom from disaster, sickness or misfortune arrives. Where are our comforts *now* ? In this season of trial and alarm, to what sources are we to apply for succour, and for intelligence how to bear up against positive pain ? A cloud has overcast the scene. The sun of gaiety and mirth has withdrawn his treacherous beams. Darkness is coming on. A long and dreary night threatens us. Oh God ! in this perilous moment, what *can* we resort to, but to the comforts of *virtue* and of *religion*, and the remembrance of a *well-spent life* ! Where are the Prodigal's former comrades flown ? Why do they not surround him, and infuse balm into his wounded soul, and light up the fire of never-dying hope in his tremulous heart ?! “ There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked : ” how then can they *impart* it to others ? Ah, then, my brethren ! this—this is the moment, which

every wanderer from Christ's Book of Life must experience ; and in which no resolution can be efficacious, but that which causes him to fall down, prostrate before his Maker, in dust and ashes and to solicit his pardon for having sinned against him, and being "no more worthy to be called his son."

This, believe me, is the *only* measure which can effectually dispel our alarms ; and, what is of far greater importance, secure to us a seat among the blissful mansions of our heavenly Father. While there is life, there is hope. Let it, therefore, especially with those who have indulged in a long and fruitless course of iniquity, be the great business of every remaining moment of time, to obtain and secure the reconciliation and affection of the Saviour of the world.

No hesitating measures—no half resolves—no lukewarm spirit should mingle with a course of life thus wisely begun. Repentance, to be efficacious, must be constant and consistent. The fruits of it must daily be shewn. In our chambers, musing at eventide, in prayer, mixing with the world, and engaged in our several avocations and professions, we must uniformly shew the *fruits* of a well-grounded repentance. It may, at first,

cause us many bitter tears of anguish ; but what, I ask, are the tears of the bitterest anguish, shed here—and wiped away in the sunshine of Christian hope — compared with those mental torments which must be sustained hereafter, when the irrevocable sentence is passed, and we are shut out of the kingdom of heaven?! Away, then, with hope: with peace: with comfort: with love. The horrid stupor of despair, never to be dispelled, or mitigated, has succeeded: and misery, and grief everlasting, convince us what we have lost in not returning to our heavenly Father, and confessing our sins and unworthinesses.

Let us all, therefore, arise; and at all times be ready to make our humble confession to Almighty God, “meekly kneeling upon our knees: let us acknowledge our manifold sins and wickedness: earnestly repent, and be heartily sorry for our misdoings: the remembrance of them being grievous unto us, and the burden of them intolerable. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, FORGIVE US ALL THAT IS PAST.”

SERMON XVI.

LUKE XV. 10.

*There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth.**

WHOEVER examines the Holy Scriptures with a heart sensibly touched, and a mind seriously disposed, to appreciate their meaning and efficacy, cannot but acknowledge that they contain the most familiar illustrations, and the most consoling encouragements, in the way to everlasting salvation. The chapter, from which the text is taken, is singularly confirmative of the truth of the foregoing remark. The pleasure which a man experiences on finding one lost sheep which has strayed from the remaining ninety-nine of the fold, is likened by our blessed Saviour unto the joy which shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. So the gratification which a poor woman feels, on recovering one

* Preached at St. Mary's, July 4th, 1824.

lost piece of silver, is likened by the same high authority unto the joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.

The illustration of this heavenly joy, as drawn from the satisfaction felt by a human being on finding his lost treasure, be it what it may, is sufficiently simple and obvious: and the consolation arising from an absolute, thorough repentance, as affording joy to the angels which are in heaven, is surely of the most encouraging, exalted, and imperative nature. Thus, my brethren, God Almighty wins us over to a knowledge of his laws, and to a sense of our own importance in the scale of created beings, by precepts the most pointed, and by exhortations the most encouraging and familiar.

We are also told, in the verses immediately preceding that from which the text is taken, that ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance, cause not so much joy, in the sight of heaven, as the heartfelt, entire, and perfectly sincere repentance of one sinner. Again, in those verses which immediately *succeed* the text, our Saviour pursues the same strain or doctrine of repentance by the celebrated parable of the *prodigal son*,

whose turning from his evil ways so transportingly affected his father, and caused such jealousy in the brother.* From the *entire* chapter then, this conclusion is manifest : that repentance is necessary to salvation—that repentance produces joy and comfort to all that are spectators of it, as well as to the sinner himself—and that God Almighty is pleased to look down with approbation, and his ministering Spirits to feel delight, on the manifestation of such repentance. The subject therefore of this Discourse is the *nature* and *end* of *repentance*.

In the Scriptures, perhaps, a conversion from the idolatries of *Paganism* was also meant, as much as an entire and thorough reformation from the usual indulgence of the appetites and lusts of the flesh. But now, in the *christian dispensation*, “a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness,” are the tests of the repentance in question.

And, first, the man who lost his sheep, and the woman who lost her money, straitway sought for the departed treasure. They no sooner became sensible of the loss, than they strove to repair it. The application to ourselves—indeed to all ranks and conditions of men—is obvious enough. We must no sooner

* See the preceding Discourse.

become sensible of our infirmities, than we must strive to repair them; the moment we know we have *erred*, that moment must we set about *correcting* our wanderings. There must be no half measures; no hesitating doubts; no treacherous misgivings—but, as the lapses from integrity and virtue have been distinct and defined, so the retracing of our deceitful steps must be as promptly and as undeviatingly pursued. You observe, my brethren, that our Saviour's illustration (as was noticed at the opening of this Discourse) is exceedingly simple and striking. The man, who loses his sheep, goes immediately in pursuit after the straggler from the fold: the woman, who loses her piece of silver, immediately lights a candle, and sweeps the house, and seeks diligently till she finds it. So let the man, **THE SINNER**, who has wandered from the ways of his Maker, who has walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and stood in the way of sinners, let him immediately look into his own bosom—let him listen to the reproaches of his own heart—and let him, above all things, seek consolation in the inspired word of God. Let him seek **THE BIBLE**, and this will furnish him with a light to shew him, first, the deformity of his conduct,

and, secondly, the beauty, the loveliness, the holiness, of that path of life from which his feet have so fatally turned. Many a poor, wretched, benighted sinner, hath failed in finding out the consolations, as well as the real nature, of repentance, because he has had recourse to *man*, when he should have had recourse to *God*: because he chose to substitute the ravings of the fanatic, or the wily counsels of the sceptic, for the letter and spirit of his Bible—and the sound and sober commentaries thereon, by the pious, the learned, and the good.

I trust in God that examples of these mistaken notions of repentance are becoming rarer and rarer; and that when so much has been done and yet continues to be done, in “training up a child in the way he should go,” that child will not, when arrived at man’s estate, be so prone, as he would be without such an education, to shut his eyes upon that *only code of laws* which will secure his happiness here and hereafter.

The first step, then, in the nature or doctrine of repentance, is, that it be *early*: the second step, which I am about to illustrate, is, that it be *sincere*. Now repentance, to be sincere, must be persevered in. I admit that

a man may repent once, or twice, and may be *sincere* in each act of repentance—and that perseverance in repentance does not, at first view, seem to be synonymous with *sincerity*. A second reflection, however, may correct the supposed subtleness of definition as to the affinity of these two words—for the *test*, it may be contended, of the *sincerity* of our repentance, is to be found in the *repetition* of it: in the *perseverance* in it. We are daily and hourly lapsing into sin, by some channel or mode, of which at first we may not discover the nature; and we must as *often*, and as a *consequence*, have recourse to *repentance*—to prayer—to communion with our own hearts—to detection of our errors—to tearing away the sin that besets us—to humiliation of spirit—to perfect, child-like simplicity and obedience—and entire prostration before our Maker. If we are sincere in this method of self-examination and amendment, we shall practice it over and over again; because we are *constantly* in want of it—and what is this but *perseverance* in repentance?

The man, you observe, does not *stop* in pursuit of his lost sheep till he has *found* it. The woman seeks about the house with her lighted candle, which she does not lay down

till she has *discovered* the lost piece of silver. So must we *persevere* in the practice of repentance — in communion with our own hearts — in prayer to God — in entreaty for pardon, through Jesus Christ our Lord — until we absolutely *find* the comfort, the joy, the unspeakable transport of “a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.”

This, therefore, naturally brings me to a consideration of the second, and remaining branch of my Discourse—which is to treat of the *end* of repentance. Now, the end of it, is surely of a most sacred, and yet winning and encouraging, character. God’s own ministering spirits — the angels which are in heaven—have joy over one sinner that repenteth. What love, what mercy, what condescending kindness and sympathy is this! A wretched, sinful mortal, repents: turns, in heart and soul, from the evil of his ways:—and wide as the heavens are from the earth, yet there is joy in the mansions of our Father over that repentant sinner! Can any *earthly* consideration be more encouraging, more powerful, more important than this? The Saviour of the world confirms the promises and exhortations of the Prophets—yea, he more than confirms them. Isaiah told us

that, by a thorough repentance, and turning from the evil of our ways, our sins should become white as snow, although they had been dyed with the red of scarlet ; but Christ says, that HEAVEN itself hath joy on the conversion and repentance of a sinner. The sighs and tears we shed, in this miserable vale of trial and affliction, are answered by the angels in heaven, with demonstrations of joy :— as *tests* of our final admission into the same mansions with themselves—as *earnests* of our future sympathies of celestial transport—where tears shall be for ever wiped from our eyes, and where sorrow, and want, and bitterness of spirit, shall never have place.

But say, my brethren, although this be the *great*, and triumphant end of repentance—the principal, and if I may so speak, the crowning issue of all our worldly sufferings and afflictions—yet, ask your own hearts, whether repentance, here *below*, doth not work good, and make joyful the bosoms of others, as well as that of the late sufferer himself? Although the Scriptures notice, in this portion of the Gospel, the joy only which is in *heaven*, over the repentant sinner, yet, as the greater must include the less, we

can well suppose that the Scriptures do not shut out from our observation—or forbid our notice of—the joy which is felt on *earth!*—over the same repentant sinner!

Look abroad, therefore, in the world: or rather look into your families and among your familiar friends—and witness the joy and happiness which are diffused around in consequence of repentance and amendment: and, in so doing, you cannot but contrast it with the misery, and agony of heart, which have arisen in consequence of a perseverance in *evil* ways. See the hardened, become soft and kind: the disobedient, dutiful; the rebellious, submissive; the passionate, gentle; the revengeful, appeased; the relentless, forgiving; the liar, a lover of truth; the profligate, a lover of virtue; the faithless, a pattern of fidelity and affection. Here are the fruits of repentance, shewn in a summary and perhaps general point of view. But *particularise* a few of these instances. Think of an obstinate and rebellious child, who is breaking his father's heart in proportion as he is wasting his patrimony! Think of a subtle and malignant acquaintance, who, under the guise of friendship, is wringing the last semblance even of the property from

the possessions of a generous and an unsuspecting comrade! Think of the absolute and irresistible power with which *wealth* sometimes clothes an individual, and who exercises that power in trampling upon the feeble, and fast binding the impoverished and distressed! Think of a husband, who treats the object of his free choice, and the wife of his own bosom, not only with scorn and severity, but with the violation of all ties of honour and of affection! Think of the *pain* which such a course of life imparts to all who are only *spectators* of it — and then think of *the joy* which, in proportion, is imparted, by witnessing the rebellious child become dutiful—the gamester, a man of temperance—the tyrant, a lover of mercy—the faithless husband, an affectionate and atoning partner for life! These are the joyful fruits of repentance here—but, in those workings and demonstrations of a repenting bosom, which are the offspring of privacy and *seclusion*—in those aspirations of a broken and contrite heart, which are breathed out in private, and which reach the throne of mercy and truth—in *such* demonstrations of repentance, (which are the necessary effects of the cases just mentioned), the angels in heaven

have joy : nay, our Almighty Father himself will contemplate and approve such, with a portion of that feeling by which his attendant spirits are influenced !

Thus have I endeavoured to shew, first, the nature of that doctrine laid down in the words of the text ; and, secondly, the *end* of it—and this latter, as applicable to us here, and hereafter. May the same Spirit, which has imparted this merciful and comforting doctrine, continue its guidance and protection to us in every stage of life, and every department of society, in which we shall stand in greater need of such Almighty aid. May no hesitation, doubt, or disbelief, bewilder and intercept us in our *immediate* return to virtue, after lapsing into vice. May we instantly have recourse to repentance, as the Shepherd flew to save the straggler from his fold ; and may a death-bed, of calm resignation, and of a joyful and deeply grounded anticipation of eternity, be the fruits of an early, a sincere, and a steady practice of repentance.

SERMON XVII.

LUKE xiii. 2, 3.

*And Jesus answering, said unto them, suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

IT has been repeatedly observed to you, that, in the Discourses of our Saviour, a wonderful facility is displayed of putting both convincing and fallacious arguments in a clear, simple, and irresistible point of view. Numberless are the instances which might be noticed as corroborative of this remark; but perhaps few could have been more judiciously selected than that which forms the subject matter of our present attention.

The chapter, from which the text is chosen, opens thus; "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans,

* Preached at St. Mary's, August 2, 1824.

whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." The Galileans were a factious tribe, founded by one Judas Gaulonita, which taught opposition to the Roman government: many of these were slain by Pilate in the act of making their sacrifices, whose blood the Roman governor is supposed to have wantonly poured, along with the blood of the sacrificed beasts, upon the altar. The precipitate feelings of the greater part of the people who surrounded Christ, supposed this punishment to have happened to the Galileans in consequence of their wickedness. Jesus, however, observed to them — "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above *all* the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He then takes another instance, by way of illustration: "Or, those eighteen, (says he) upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they are sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The reflections which are suggested by a due deliberation upon these words, may be divided under the following heads. First, God sometimes permits a premature and severe

death, either as a punishment due to the wickedness of those that suffer, or as a warning to the living who are going on in profligacy. Secondly, the punishment even of the guilty is no extenuation of our own errors or crimes; and that, to be constantly passing a severe judgment upon others, is a sign of a harsh, illiberal, and unchristian-like disposition in ourselves. Thirdly, the miseries that befall others, whether justly or unjustly, are frequently an awful warning to ourselves, to look into our own hearts, and to see, whether or not, according to the equitable decrees of heaven, we may not be amenable to the *same* visitation.

First, then, it has been remarked that God suffers punishment to be sometimes inflicted as the wages due to sin—as the just consequence of long continued turpitude. In the nature of things, this would appear consonant to every principle of justice and common sense; for men are frequently deterred from crime, not by a deeply rooted abhorrence of it, but from seeing how crimes are punished with death in others. That our heavenly Father inflicts punishment upon some, not from any erring principle or conduct in the sufferer, but for the benefit of others, is most strikingly displayed in the

tortures which he permitted to be inflicted upon his only begotten son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom was no guile, nor variableness, nor shadow of turning. The chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and, wonderful to say, to HIM were imputed, although absolutely immaculate, the sins of the world. Other examples, less awful and striking, may be adduced. Such were the afflictions of Job and Joseph ; of David and Daniel ; whose stories the Apostle tells us “ were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” Such also were the sufferings of St. Paul himself, and of all his brethren and fellow labourers, who trod in the steps of the great Captain of their salvation, and who, like him, were made perfect through suffering. And such, without doubt, are the poverty and sickness, the pain, the sorrow, the contempt, the shame, and all the other acute mental, and sometimes bodily, sufferings, which assailed the holy men of past times, and which you sometimes see assail virtuous people around you. These, so far from being meant as punishments, are frequently considered as blessings — and the effect of them, upon those *exempt* from such maladies, is as fre-

quently salutary and gracious : for, when we see men bear severe afflictions with patience and magnanimity, we are taught, not only to respect their persons, their characters, and their memories, but to cultivate in ourselves those seeds which produce similar fruits.

Secondly, we may remark that, because the guilty suffer, and we escape, our innocence is not, thereby, necessarily established. We may be spared, if we do not repent and amend our lives, for a *severer* visitation. We are, in truth, too apt to attach merit to ourselves, when we escape the calamity which has befallen others ; and what is worse, we are too prone to asperse the memories, and even blacken the misdeeds of those, who have been unhappily overtaken by punishment and disgrace.

We seem to rise, as it were, by their fall ; and to be elevated into applause and distinction, only because others have sunk a few degrees lower than ourselves in ignominy. This facility of passing a panegyric upon our supposed virtues, and of dealing out censure upon the palpable failings of others, requires most seriously to be checked and rooted out of the heart of every honest Christian. It argues an extreme narrowness of mind. Do

not let us delight in multiplying the miseries, or sharpening the afflictions, of others. The punishment of HEAVEN is surely sufficient without the caustic severity of a fellow creature's remarks.

Most lamentable is it to observe how ready men are to magnify the vices of others: to put accidental, but certainly not justifiable, lapses from virtue, in careful competition with long-continued acts of benevolence and philanthropy. Whence arises this propensity in human nature, and why is it not more zealously counteracted and successfully extirpated than it appears to be? It is because, knowing our natural frailties, we are glad to seek opportunities of contrasting our conduct by the still more eccentric and irregular conduct of others; and what we knew to be *doubtful* in ourselves, now absolutely assumes the shape of *positive excellence*; and, as human nature loves to flatter itself, we are even gratifying our absurdities, our follies and vices, at the expense of the most palpable truth.

Look abroad in life, and see if one human being more than another is to be despised and shunned for this contemptible conduct. Will it not be *that man*, who is roaming for



prey upon the frailties and sinfulness of his fellow creatures? who is delighting his imagination, and soothing his conscience, with his own supposed excellences, merely because he sees a few others yet more distinguished than himself for follies and criminalities? Can any thing argue a more mean, or depraved state of understanding than this? and can any thing, in the face of heaven, be more hypocritical and provoking of divine punishment?

How dreadful would be the state of society, if men did not occasionally suffer the suggestions of *mercy*, of *loving kindness*, and of *forgiveness*, to mingle in their reflections!— and how like an established inquisition, presiding over the most common habits, and influencing the most common thoughts, of mankind, would be the lot of human beings, thus alive to the vindictive feelings of censure, slander, and condemnation!

Here the captive mourns in his dungeon: there, the poor man, the father of a numerous family, lies stretched on his death-bed, with scarcely a remnant to cover his lifeless body. These may have been visitations, and just ones, from heaven. Now let the censorious and hard hearted man talk of these instances

—and he will speak loudly and confidently of their being punishments which their *wickedness* provoked; while he congratulates himself, not only on his exemption from such misfortunes, but on his *merits* which have entitled him to such exemption. So boastful, so hollow, so utterly fallacious and despicable, are the pretensions of human nature!

But let the *humane* and *liberal-minded* Christian view the foregoing picture of wretchedness. Let him see the poor, neglected, and heart-fallen captive; let him watch the tear of despair which dims an eye that once sparkled at the call of harmless pleasure. Let him see the remembrance of other days engraven, as it were, upon the faded countenance; while the horrid stupor of insensibility of approaching death renders the picture more touching. Perhaps this man has committed a serious offence, and suffers what the laws of his country have explicitly told him would be his fate, if he persevered in evil doing. All this may be, and very justly: but is he a *sinner* above every *other* one in the eyes of the christian philanthropist? On the contrary, the merciful, the wise, and the christian-like observer of mankind, will endeavour to lighten the load of misery which sets

so heavily on his heart. The sunshine of charity will irradiate his cell—and the genuine feelings of sympathy and of succour will be exercised in pouring the balm of happiness into his distracted soul.

So thinks and so acts the genuine disciple of Christ Jesus. The heart of a sincere Christian is prompt to forgive and to forget: not to scrutinise into every little failing; not to magnify venial errors into unpardonable crimes; but to pity and support the frail and the mistaken.

I am now, in the third place, and, as a conclusion to this Discourse, to shew, that the misery which has overtaken *others*, is an awful warning to *ourselves*—to look into our own hearts, “and sincerely to repent; lest, in the language of our Saviour, we likewise perish.”

Every rational being and sincere believer in Christianity must, at times, recal his scattered thoughts: must examine his past conduct; and revolve, deeply and seriously in his own mind, upon the motives and the consequences of his actions. It is the property of true wisdom, from every thing which occurs, to draw something for our own benefit and advantage. Whatever observations

we make on *others*, if they are not directed to *this* useful purpose, are in truth of no consequence or importance. And yet, if we were to judge from the practice of the world, one would think that the only end and design of knowledge, was, to enable us to make shrewd and severe reflections on the conduct of other men. God knows there is room enough, and too much, for censure in the lives of the most apparently upright men. But let me ask you, and it is a question which I press upon your hearts, let me ask, if there be any wisdom, if there be any virtue, if there be any honour, if there be any profit, in being ready upon all occasions to mention, to ridicule, or to reprobate, the misconduct even of such an apparently upright character? Let those, whom we thus censure, be as guilty as we please—it will be no excuse for us, if, notwithstanding this, we *ourselves* are guilty of follies and crimes. Whatever becomes of *them*, howsoever *they* are dealt with, whatever they *suffer*, or whatever they *deserve*, there can be no question but we are all accountable for *ourselves*. We are not answer at the throne of God for any sins or misdeeds of *theirs*. We shall have enough to do to justify our *own* actions and to excuse

our own conduct, at that awful tribunal. Little shall we be concerned about the fate of others; any farther than a charitable disposition may incline us to wish well to the whole race of men. In the meantime, whatever hardships and severities we *escape*, that are inflicted upon our *Christian brethren*, we should first make it matter of praise and thanksgiving that we are rescued and delivered, by God's gracious providence, from the multitude of disasters, afflictions, and calamities, that are sent among the sons of men. Here we see the *virtuous* and the *brave* cut off from their friends, their relatives, and their country: their blood stains other lands: their bodies are entombed in foreign graves: they have fought a good fight: they are remembered and registered in the annals of earthly glory. The widows' heart is cut in twain: the children mourn: the faithful friend weeps, and a grateful country embalms their memory. Now those, personally exempted from a knowledge of such misfortunes, feel these things only by association of ideas: but their hearts, I trust, will always be susceptible, and their gratitude to heaven will always flow, not only for exemption from danger, but for the obli-

gations to those who have braved and surmounted them. In short, let us always bless God that, under the covering of his wings, and through his protection, we need not be afraid for any terror by night ; nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that walketh at noon day.

Such will be the feelings, and something like these will be the sentiments, of a faithful disciple of our Saviour : and, in truth, what upon earth is there which more exalts a human character, or better entitles him to the approbation of his Creator ? We may talk of dignity, and grandeur, and hospitality, and cheerfulness ; but *what* can be put in competition with a human intellect, which knows its insignificancy in respect to God, and which urges to the performance of all charitable duties in respect to man ?

He, therefore, unquestionably is among the happiest of mortals, who cultivates in his own bosom the seeds of humility, benevolence, and love : who scatters, with a liberal hand, what a gracious Providence hath enabled him to scatter ; who keeps under his passions ; and, if I may so say, organizes his reflec-

tions according to the dictates of gospel truths. These teach him peace and good will towards men ; and these too tell him, that if he strenuously labours in such a calling, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

SERMON XVIII.

Deuteronomy xi. 26, 27, and part of 28th verse.

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day : And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day.

THE Book of *Deuteronomy*, from which these words are taken, derives its name from its containing the statutes and ordinances of God delivered the *second time* to the people of Israel. The word, which is purely greek, signifies the second law. And why, you may ask, was the law of God delivered *twice* ? Was it from the obscurity of the first promulgation, or from the difficulty of putting it in practice when understood ? It was from neither of these causes ; but solely from the obstinacy

* Preached at St. Mary's, May 23, 1824.

and blind infatuation of man—solely from the stupidity of our fore-fathers, who, in the language of the Psalmist, started aside like a broken bow—worshipping their Creator in the shape of a molten image, and amusing themselves in all the wild and blasphemous modes of adoration, which are the characteristics only of nations unenlightened by a proper knowledge of the Deity.

The rebellion of man did not, however, arrest the mercy of Heaven. Although God's own finger inscribed on the first table the laws which were promulgated with thunders and lightnings on Mount Sinai—although the Majesty of Heaven was so conspicuous in every part of that most remarkable and awful transaction—yet it seems to have had no *permanent* effect on the perverted intellects of human creatures. So great, however, was at *first* the terror and dismay of the Israelites, that they implored, importuned their leader, Moses, to stand between God and themselves : to intercede for them : lest they died under the terror of the Almighty's presence. Some short time after, as you well know, all this fear and dismay subsided : all this reverence for the Deity was converted into . . . the most gross and stupid act which it

was possible for human beings to perform. They fell down and worshiped a calf, the work of their own hands : when Moses, overpowered with indignation at such a sight, dashed the first table of the commandments on the ground, and broke it into pieces. God Almighty, whose mercy endureth for ever, was pleased in his infinite goodness not to withhold a *second* promulgation of the same laws ; and accordingly, in the book of *Deuteronomy*, these laws are again delivered and explained to the Israelites—who are expressly told, in the words of the first lesson of this morning's service—to bind them as signs upon their hands, and that they shall be as frontlets between their eyes : and who are further told, in conclusion, (in the words of my text), that if they abide in these laws, if they pertinaciously adhere to them, and practice them as much as it lay in their power to perform, it would prove to them a *blessing* : if they did *not* obey such commandments, and turned aside from them, then it would prove to them a *curse*— a curse, indeed, of the most afflicting and tremendous consequence. Thus, my brethren, did the Creator of the world, with the same benevolent spirit with which man was called into

existence from the dust of the earth—with the same comprehensive mind with which all creatures were formed to do him homage—and with the same omnipotent power with which the sun and the moon and the stars were ordained, in their several courses, to scatter light and heat upon the millions of worlds of which the universe is composed—thus, I say, did this same power, shew explicitly to our forefathers, the road to bliss and the road to misery : wherein consisted their happiness, and wherein sorrow and death would inevitably overtake them. Everything is laid down in a manner the most clear, express, and positive ; so that the Israelites could not shelter themselves under the plea of *ambiguity* or *doubt*.

Thus far then, in explanation of my text, as connected with the sacred book from which it is chosen, and in vindication of the Deity as it respects our forefathers. Let us, in the next place, see whether these words, although centuries upon centuries have elapsed since their delivery, may not be equally applicable to *us* : let us see whether to follow the law of God be not *now* a blessing, and to turn aside from it a curse.

There is a notion which perhaps too gene-

rally prevails, that the letter and the spirit of the *Old Testament* are in a great measure done away by the precepts of the *New*. Now it must be premised, that those who are prone to sin, are seldom at a loss for expedients to gloss it over by some approving term ; and accordingly, it oftentimes happens, that men of the most relaxed, not to say immoral habits of life, are frequently very dexterous in putting constructions, on their own conduct, and on certain *texts of scripture* which they suppose to bear upon it—which have escaped the ingenuity of the learned and the pious. It is really disgusting to a sober-minded christian, to see with what shameless effrontery, and upon what a slender stock of knowledge, some men will hazard opinions relating to the Bible, unsupported by the least historical fact or logical accuracy, and untempered with one trait of christian humility. True it is, “ the law came by Moses, and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”—but did the latter abrogate the sin of *idolatry* ? Did they intimate that *blasphemy*, and *adultery*, and *murder*, and *theft*, were to be let loose to make havoc in the world ? Assuredly it did no such thing. On the contrary, the conduct of our blessed Saviour makes manifest, in the high-

est degree, the precision, the purity, and the importance, of the commandments of God. CHRIST constantly referred to the precepts of old times, to the examples of former ages ; and the tenor of his life is the most beautiful and forcible commentary on the perfection of the laws contained in the Old Testament. Yes—the laws of God, as they stand in the Old Testament, and as they affect our moral conduct—still remain immutable as the Spirit which gave them birth. God Almighty yet speaks through every sentence and every sentiment of *either* Testament. His decrees, his commandments, are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Let no one, therefore, imagine that he can escape punishment for his offences merely because he fancies a *milder* construction is put upon them in the language of the Gospels. But what *is* this language? “Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doth the will* of my Father, which is in heaven.”

We are now to see how the keeping of God's commandments is *yet* a blessing, and the breaking of them a curse.

From our earliest youth we have certain

precepts of virtue instilled into us, as the means of keeping us hereafter in credit and comfort with ourselves and the world. And why are our parents so watchful over our tender years, so anxious to sow that seed which is to blossom into future holiness of living? From whence have *they* such notions of rectitude and morality? From their *own* parents before them; and they again from their ancestors; generation preceding generation. But whence is the *source* of all this excellence of precept? From what salubrious fountain-head does it flow? It flows from the BIBLE, the book of light, of life, and of immortality. All notions of morality are grafted upon that inexhaustible stock; and it will be found, although occasionally obscured by Pagan idolatry and heathenish superstition—although occasionally perverted by the craft of some, and by the prejudice of others—that, in the Books of the *Old and New Testament*, which we emphatically call the *Bible*, there is the purest morality, and the most rational and incontrovertible notions of God, of his creatures, of his son Jesus Christ, and of the great Christian scheme of redemption.

It is therefore from experiencing the *blessings* of obeying the commandments of God,

that you are instructed by your parents, when young, and by your teachers and pastors when advanced in years, to keep God's holy laws, and to walk in the same as long as you live. See the course of life which those human beings enjoy who practice this precept! See how those families are respected abroad, and are happy in themselves, who neglect not the worship of their Creator, and who meditate often, in private, upon the excellency and awful importance of the religion of Christ. It is in vain you talk of the world's pleasures, and of the world's dissipation, to ease the brow of care, or mitigate the sorrows of the soul. Will any thing like *these* things administer consolation to the parent who has seen child after child drop into the grave? to the widow, who is left without her beloved partner and protector? to the deserted orphan, or to the father with his numerous offspring who have seen other and better days? No! . . . it is in these cases, that GOD ONLY is the protector and comforter; and the obeying of his laws a blessing and delight. It is in these cases that the Christian clings to the code of his salvation, and prepares himself, though surrounded with misery and misfortune, for the

entering upon that state where sorrow shall be no more. It is in the dark night of adversity, that the word of God, and the gospel of Christ, become as illuminated beacons to direct us in safety through every threatening and appalling scene of existence. And even without these *extreme* cases, there is evidence sufficient to convince us that the keeping of God's laws is a blessing and consolation. Every thing is dependent upon a proper sense of our Almighty Father. Where there is no reverence, there can be no religion; for man is a creature of fancy and of perpetual change. One generation builds systems, for another to pull them down. But the laws of God are eternally binding; and nations, like individuals, flourish by obeying them. They are so consonant with every thing connected with benevolence, mercy, peace, justice, and integrity—they point to such sublime ends—they encourage by such soothing promises—they carry, in every word of them, so much force, so much propriety, so much beauty and efficacy, that virtuous kingdoms, like virtuous families, exclaim, O God, thy decrees are merciful and wise, and in obeying them thy servant hath an exceeding great reward!

I am now, in the last place, to shew that it is a curse *not* to obey the commandments of the Lord our God.

Most of the vices in the world are to be traced to an apathy in matters of religion: for, when men cease to keep the laws of their Creator, it is not very surprising that they cease to respect human ordinances. So closely are the laws of God and man linked together, that if the former be snapt asunder, the latter must be necessarily disarranged: and thus it is, that when we cease to worship our Creator in *public*, we have not much inclination to do him homage in *private*.

Now, what is the consequence of this neglect? A total abandonment of all those serious and rational notions, without which man is but the gilded insect of the day: every breeze discomposes, and every tempest shakes, him. He is a freethinker at one moment, and the slave of an absurd system at another. He has forsaken his God, and can it be a matter of surprise that his God should have forsaken *him* ? !

But mark the baneful consequences which ensue—THE CURSE which follows.

This coldness and scepticism, this wavering between God and Baal, settles in the

end into acts of avowed folly or corruption: for it sometimes, and indeed too often, happens, that when men cease to obtain applause for their virtues, they strive to procure it for their singularities. But are these, I ask, to be the consolations of a death-bed? Are these to be the legacies which we are to bequeath our relatives? Is it on such a retrospective view, that the gushing tear is to be wiped away, and the agonising soul to be soothed? Are our dear friends and dearer children to kneel round our death-beds, and supplicate heaven for salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, when our consciences tell us that we have seldom or never offered up a prayer on *similar* terms? My brethren, these things are prospective, and we do not therefore so much heed them: but you well know that this is a scene which many have *witnessed* in the examples of others, and which all must one day *experience* in their own fate. You may drive the anticipation of it away by the pursuits of to-day, but a MORROW must come, when it shall be proved how sweet is the consolation of those who have walked in the laws and commandments of their Maker.

Oh, hasten, therefore, while it is in your power, to make God your friend, and not

your foe! While the lamp of life burns brightly, consider that "to obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." If you have hitherto neglected the ordinances of your Maker, and the gospels of your Redeemer, retrace your steps: and consider, that, where there is unfeigned sorrow in man, there is never-ceasing mercy in heaven. You must not only resolve, but *act up* to such resolutions. A future *life* of holiness will be the best testimony of contrition for past negligences and follies. Your everlasting happiness or misery depends upon your obeying, or scorning, the laws of Almighty God. Eternity is no subject to be trifled with. While, therefore, *one hour* out of the twelve remains, hasten to find admittance into the vineyard, whose fruit shall never fail, and whose Master is the Saviour of the world.

SERMON XIX.

PSALM li. 10.

*Make me a clean heart, O God; and renew
a right spirit within me.*

IN order to understand the full import of these words, it may be essential to turn our attention to the verses which precede and follow the one of which the text is composed. From the very commencement of the Psalm from which it is taken, it is evident that the inspired author seems deeply impressed with the sinfulness and depravity of man's heart: of the necessity of seeking for mental purity, and of praying earnestly for moral amendment. And it is not a little consoling, from the very opening of this Psalm, that God's *mercy* encourages the suppliant monarch to make his avowal of turpitude—and to offer up his hope and prayer that he may be forgiven: — “thoroughly cleansed from his sins.”

“ Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy



great goodness : according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness ; and cleanse me from my sin."

Here therefore, my brethren, you see, on the one hand, a confession of the mercy, the loving kindness, and the unspeakable goodness of Almighty God : and, on the other, an equally frank avowal of the offences and wickedness of the human heart. After a yet farther scrutiny into the turpitude of human nature, and a continued confession of divine mercy, the Psalmist goes on to say : " Turn thy face from my sins, and put out all my misdeeds." And then, in order that such desirable end may be accomplished, he pours forth this prayer at the throne of grace. "*Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*"

From these words it would appear, that *cleanliness of heart* and *rectitude of spirit* were two essential objects towards the attainment of human happiness, and a reconciliation with Almighty God: for no man, I am persuaded, can be thoroughly happy in this world, who is conscious of being unable to stand before his Creator in private.

Let us observe, first, that we must have a

clean heart: and that no one can have a right spirit without this cleanliness of heart. It is not worth a minute's delay, to enquire concerning what is *actually meant* by the word heart. Every person, whose understanding is in the least cultivated, is alive to the sense and spirit of this expression. Without a good heart, or good principles, we can do nothing becoming a Christian. It is true, that our hearts are deceitful above all things: but if they sometimes lead us wofully astray, at other times they impel us to the performance of much that is noble and generous. There seems to be little or no medium in thus estimating the character of human nature. We are told, in another place, to keep our hearts with all diligence; for out of them are the issues of life: that is, if our hearts be good, our actions will partake of this benevolence of disposition: if they are bad, they will as necessarily be depraved.

A good heart is the temple of virtue. One man is witty, another is learned, a third is ingenious, and a fourth affluent; and, as such, respected:—but where we have nothing of the “good and true of heart” (as the Psalmist in another place expresses it) we have not the most interesting traits of human

nature to contemplate. David was rich, and powerful, and feared, and dreaded, and respected: but in communion with the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, he knew that these qualifications availed him *nothing*. He prayed to God to have a clean heart and a right spirit renewed within him: knowing, without doubt, that the great Jehovah looked into the heart and reins—into the inner man: and that if all were *not* right *there*, it availed nothing to bring forward the splendour of his household, and the popularity of his name.

My brethren, this mode of considering the subject is fraught with very useful advice and instruction to us all. It shews us that, if abilities and situations like those of David, be *alone* insufficient to obtain God's grace and favour, *we* must have recourse to some *other* and more efficacious expedient: and it shews us too, what we should never fail to bear in recollection, that the qualities which David prayed for, are such as *we may all* attain unto. I mean, goodness of heart and rectitude of spirit or principle. God Almighty does not require of us to be merely rich, respected, and admired, but he requires of us to be *good and virtuous*: and, in order that we may be so, he would seem to urge

each of us to utter the prayer of the Psalmist: "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

This is the prayer, which, if uttered every night and morning, with a true and contrite spirit, could not fail of being heard; and of being attended, in its consequence, with immeasurable benefits to ourselves and families. Born in sin, and the child of wrath, you would, by perseverance in such a prayer, and by a *life* led conformably with what it *exacts*, become a child of virtue, of goodness, and of grace. By this, I do not mean any wild indefinable notions; but clear, strait-forward, and attainable principles; such as every man, who chooses properly to exercise the reason with which God hath gifted him, may enjoy. Convinced then, as I trust you are, not only of the *necessity* of uttering this prayer, but of the *facility* with which it may be uttered, and of its general application, I come now to direct your attention to the *consequence* of such ejaculation, when frequently made in sincerity and in truth. David prayed for a clean heart, *in order* that he might have a *right spirit* renewed within him.

First, then, we are to pray for a clean heart—which has been already explained to

you : and, secondly, for a right spirit to be renewed within us : that is, a *spirit to do*, what, having a clean heart, we know *ought to be done* : the manifestation of active benevolence : active virtue : letting our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Happy is that man who can approach the throne of grace, conscious of having a clean heart, and a right spirit attached to it. And it would seem, as if this *rectitude of spirit* were held out to us as almost the *chief* object of attainment ; for, from an apprehension of not possessing this right spirit, the Psalmist exclaims with a sort of bitterness of soul—
“ Cast me not away from thy presence, and *take not thy Holy Spirit* from me. O give me the comfort of thy help again : and stablish me with thy free Spirit.” You see therefore, my brethren, from the frequency of his mention of Spirit, whether holy or free, that this seems to have been the principal object of David’s prayer — to have a clean, proper, right, holy, and free, spirit renewed within him : the spirit of *acting*, as well as the consciousness of *thinking*, aright.

Let us now make a few observations on

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the application of David's conduct to ourselves.


There is no creature in this congregation, who can presume upon an exemption from the necessity of praying to God—first, for a clean heart; and, secondly, for the renewal of a right spirit. All is frail and corrupt beneath the sun. If any one supposes that he is *not* to approach his heavenly Father, as David did, in the strain of humility and supplication, he is most grossly deceiving himself, and playing an exceedingly hazardous game for his soul's everlasting welfare. We must first be convinced that our hearts *require* to be cleansed, or we shall never put up the prayer sincerely for their purification. The first step to truth, is, the acknowledgement of ignorance or error. But we will suppose that we have prayed for this purity of heart—and also for the renewal of a right spirit—and what should be the tenor of our conduct in consequence?

Not a half willingness or doubtful compliance with the injunctions of heaven—but a cheerful and determined inclination to exhibit in our lives, what our hearts, thus purified, and our spirits, thus renewed, tell us ought steadily to be done. There are some

men who, at one moment, are convinced of the necessity of right conduct, and, at another, are resolved not to act rightly : wavering between extremes, and affected by opposite principles, they are the sport of every gust of passion, or of every wiliness of human reason. Now this unsettled and capricious disposition can never be pleasing to Almighty God. He may hear our ejaculations for a clean heart and right spirit, but, when he perceives that we are ourselves *indifferent* to what we utter—that our lips are coldly and mechanically exercised—do you imagine that he will vouchsafe to grant the object of a merely insensible, and as it were artificial, request? Do you imagine that we can possibly have that cleanliness of heart and rectitude of spirit, which the Psalmist so urgently prayed for, and with a sense of the benefits of which he was so deeply impressed?

It is therefore against this cold, undetermined, wavering, and fickle, line of conduct that you are earnestly called upon to be on your guard. Our *own selfish* principles, and the favour of heaven, are incompatible the one with the other. The soil must be weeded and cleansed, or the seed can take no productive root.

Surrender therefore your headstrong affections, and lusts, and appetites, WHOLLY to the will of your Father. But before you do this—or rather, in order that such surrender may be effectual—be *thoroughly* convinced of the beauty, the efficacy, the worth, and value of a clean heart and of a right spirit. Then, and not till then, you will feel the force and propriety of the Psalmist's request; and each of you will offer a similar prayer with equal sincerity. And be assured, that there is nothing which can place your character in a more exalted light before your Maker, or in a more commendable one in the face of your fellow creatures, than such resolutions *steadily* acted upon. Our blessed Saviour himself presented to the view of all, who chose to behold his matchless conduct, a complete example of this cleanliness of heart and rectitude of spirit. Yet perfect and spotless as he was, he *prayed* often to his Father, passing whole nights in houses set apart for devotion. You therefore, comparatively wretched and sinful, stand greatly in need of this devotional intercourse with your heavenly Father. Nor must you rely upon any natural energies or resources of your own, to supply the want of that consolation which



can only come down from on high. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." But the Almighty, in our approaches to Him, would despise the avowal of our *virtues*, and the display or enumeration of *worldly* distinctions.

We will suppose, however, that on praying for this renewal of spirit, you actually *receive* it: that is, you receive a spirit in perfect unison with cleanliness of heart; and such as before, *without* this supernatural assistance, you had never received. Now, mark (as I humbly apprehend it) the *full import* of the latter words of the text—namely, "renewal of spirit." We must pray, not only in the first instance, to have a new spirit—but, possessing this new spirit, we must pray that we do not *lose* it, by lapsing into our former wretched habits: so that, you see, it is materially necessary *always* to approach our heavenly Father in the strain of supplication, that he will renew a right spirit within us, when he perceives that we are about to run into error, and fall off from cleanliness of heart. We must, therefore, always be on our guard; always alert, vigilant, and anxious for a *renovation* of rectitude of spirit.

We will now, in the last place, say a few words upon the *advantages* and *consequences* of having a clean heart, and a right spirit renewed within us.

When the Almighty is our friend—when we can walk in utter darkness without fear—when the arrow that flieth at day, and the pestilence that walketh at the noon-day, can, upon us, have no manner of effect—when we are defended as with a shield, (for such will be the result of an intercourse with our heavenly Father, like unto that which has been just described) we shall then *never* have occasion to call upon the hills to cover, or the mountains to overwhelm us, from an apprehension of mere mortal ill. The world may wreak its malice and spite upon the sycophant, and the slave to vice: but a spirit, commensurate with the purity of the source whence it flows, shall be *our* attendant, even in the valley of the shadow of death. A conviction, deep, strong, and immoveable, that the mighty Jehovah is our Shepherd, and that we can therefore lack nothing, is of itself a most powerful succour and source of consolation: for it will not be, as you have before heard, because we are rich, strong, prosperous, feared, and admired, that this help will

be afforded us—but because we are humble, penitent, pious, good, and forgiving. And mark, I beseech you, my brethren, the even and uniform tenor of thought and of will—the consistent and praise-worthy conduct of that Christian—who, like David, is convinced—not from wild, unsettled, and disturbed emotions—but who, like David, is *rationaly* and *solidly* convinced—that he has obtained the favour of God, and that a clean heart and a right spirit are renewed within him. There are no riches like unto such precious endowments. There is nothing, in this fickle world, which can be put into the opposite balance, to outweigh these rare and inestimable blessings. You may, from some ingenious hypothesis of your own invention, endeavour to substitute a more efficacious good: you may, in the cultivation of a system, wherein your own vanity and sophistry are more apparent than solid reason or sound deduction—imagine, for a moment, that there *are* better substitutes for peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience... but, believe me, these will only in the end turn out to be a self-created delusion: these will only be affording you shadows to embrace, or phantoms to terrify.

What can stand before the all-searching

eye, and omnipotent might, of JEHOVAH? Are we to be, till life's latest scene—till the dawn, as it were, of eternity appears—per- tinaciously clinging to human fallacies, and amusing ourselves with the bubbles which one generation of men has blown, only that they may be dissipated by another? Is the word of God, and is the Book of Life, to be set aside to make room for the self-willed and self-erring systems and creeds of *merely* human invention? Can we never open our eyes to the malice and wickedness, or contemptible folly, which, under the cover of great parade of learning, and of an equal shew of candour, too often mark merely *human* effusions? Do we hold cleanliness of heart, and rectitude of spirit—such as the greatest and most accomplished of Israel's monarchs alone sighed and prayed for—as not worthy our earnest wish, and our high and constant endeavour?

Away with every doubt—with every sickly hope and misguided reason—upon the subject. Your parents and pastors and masters have taught you to seek God's holy word and un-erring spirit—and to walk in the same all the days of your life. Keep this injunction firmly engraved upon your hearts: turn not to the right or to the left, to seek for different and a

more wholesome doctrine : for such can never be found. Approach your heavenly father in the strain of humility, of cheerfulness even, but with the most scrupulous sincerity. Think not to hide any thing from his knowledge; for such thought will be vain, and such effort will be productive of ill. Confess the sins you have committed : and hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that they may be forgiven . . . and when you pray for comforts and advantages, do not pray for wealth, for long life, and worldly distinction—but pray to have “a clean heart and a right spirit renewed within you.”

SERMON XX.

ROMANS vi. 21.

*What fruit had ye then in those things
whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end
of those things is death.**

NOTWITHSTANDING the occasional severity of St. Paul's rebukes to the different communities which he addresses—and especially to the Romans and Corinthians—he shews, upon the whole, a wonderful benevolence and liberality of feeling towards the infirmities of his fellow creatures. “ I speak, ” says he, (in the verses immediately preceding my text) “ after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh : for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” These sentiments are uttered in an imperative manner, and with the authority of one who speaks as a teacher and a

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judge. But apprehensive, probably, that the depraved Romans would stand in need of all the powerful arts of persuasion, in order that they may be converted and live, the Apostle immediately subjoins the following cogent arguments, making *them*—to whom they were addressed—reply to the questions proposed. “ For, says he, when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is death.”

Three things are observable in this mode of apostolical reasoning. First, that the commission of sin is the wandering from righteousness; secondly, that men are always ashamed of the sins which they commit; and, thirdly, that the consequence of this sinful mode of life, is DEATH. Let us, therefore, consider the subject in these three points of view: and thus, by God’s blessing, not only enlarge upon the important doctrine contained in the words of the text, but make that sort of application of it which may be productive of substantial benefit in rousing the supine and converting the profligate.

First, then, if we are slaves to sin, we are of necessity wanderers from righteousness.

Of this truth one would think it did not require a peculiar sagacity to be convinced; and yet, let us only view the conduct of *some* human beings from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age—and what is it, but a tissue of the grossest follies, and sometimes of unaccountable and criminal actions? What is it, but one continued pursuit after every thing which is derogatory from human reason, or revolting to human sensibility. Here we see a man on whom heaven bestows wealth and affluence. How does he devote it? To the relief of the needy? To the education of the ignorant? or in aid of those establishments which enlarge the boundaries of human happiness, by increasing the quantity of human knowledge, and directing it to its proper ends? Does he do *all*, or *any* of these things? Not one of them does he perform. But he is liberal of his property. He does not hide it in a napkin or under a bushel. Yes, his liberality will be seen, in a splendid retinue, by sumptuous fare, by lofty mansions, and by extensive and highly cultivated domains. Wherein then consists the *unrighteousness* of such a character? God forbid, that such men, from these things *alone*, should be deemed slaves to iniquity!—because com-



mon charity induces us to hope that they may assist their poor relatives, and do many secret benevolent acts with one hand of which the other hand may be ignorant. God forbid, that the encouragement of art and the gratification of a pure taste should be deemed iniquitous things!—but I fear it will sometimes, and indeed too often happen, that the placid character of a Christian, the affable demeanor which its Founder exhibited, and the reliance for everlasting salvation on *his* merits alone—it will too often, I say, happen that these most important parts of human study and of human action will be found wanting in the glare of magnificence, and in the indiscriminate application of wealth.

Again:—we see a human being gifted with mental attainments, allied to respectable families, and in circumstances greatly above mediocrity. Here, you will say, is every hope of excellence, and every prospect of virtue. In the society of such a one, who may not be happy? Alas! the wickedness of man's heart is discernible to few. The *real* sentiments that sometimes actuate the bosom of such a man are those of treachery and profligacy. He speaks only to ensnare: he flatters only to destroy. Not one pure spark of honour, of sensibility,

of virtue, and, of course, not of religion, ever warmed his mind, or touched his heart. It is pleasure and dissipation, and the seduction of innocence and virtue, which constitute his delight and happiness: and, perhaps, the accidental performance of *one* disinterested action—afterwards carefully registered—is put in competition with *accumulated* follies and repeated crimes. My brethren, is not such a one the servant of sin, and, of course, free from righteousness? Your hearts cannot hesitate in reply.

Now let us, out of many other cases which must present themselves to an inquisitive mind, suppose only *one more*—as an illustration of the Apostle's text: and that is, of a man perfectly LOST to ALL sense of religion—perfectly callous of every feeling connected with the belief of God, and the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. But, you will say, no such character can exist. Whence, then, let me ask, are we warned not to be influenced by such and such writers? Why is the parent solicitous to instruct his child by the law of God, and in the doctrines of his Son? Why is the preacher earnest in exhortation that ye may seek the *old* paths, and not be led away by wolves in the clothing of lambs? It is

because, not only infidelity exists, but **ABOUNDS**—not in the secret whispers of the chamber, but in the public and printed records of the day. It is because, after listening to the voice of the charmer, we shall be ridiculed for our credulity, and “mocked when our fear cometh.” The Sceptic or the Atheist is the servant of sin, because he is under no sort of controul, or *obligation*. He may tell you much of **MORAL** obligation, but God forbid we should ever be influenced by such obligation **ALONE**!

The avaricious, the voluptuary, and the sceptical are, therefore, the servants of sin, and free from righteousness. And this brings me to the second part of the subject: namely, the **FRUIT** to be had of those things whereof we are ashamed.

The Apostle takes it for granted that men sometimes *reflect* upon their past actions, and are ashamed of them, if bad, on such reflection. Surely, we must admit that this observation is founded on a just knowledge of human nature. As light and darkness, fire and water, differ palpably from each other, so must vice and peace of mind. We can never suppose that a man, uniformly in the habit of criminal pursuits, can think of such pur-

suits without sorrow and shame. The still small voice of conscience whispers to him the horror, the evils, of such a course of life. He may at first smother these compunctious visitings of human nature, or put upon them a construction precisely the reverse of what they should bear—but he will find that so many efforts to wear “a face of pleasure with a heart of pain” must, in the end, bring tenfold anguish and misery.

It is really surprising to think of the various ingenious methods which some men adopt to gloss over their enormities with some soft and approving appellation. But God is not to be mocked by these weak and ridiculous methods to escape future condemnation—nor should we ever have recourse to them as expedients which may avert from us the fate that we so justly merit.

How dreadful are the perturbations of mind of those characters whom we have before described! What FRUIT do they find in those things of which, upon reflection, they must be so heartily ashamed? Ask the man, who, with wealth and every external grandeur, shuts his door upon the poor, and forbids entrance to the virtuous and wise—ask him what solace he finds in enshrining



himself, if I may so speak, in his own magnificence? Wealth, unless usefully applied, is dirtier than the pebble which we crush beneath our feet. A name, unless adorned by purity of character, is only as a feather in the hands of a child. Sumptuous fare, unless diversified and tempered by rational intercourse, and liberal donations, is only as paint upon a sepulchre to withdraw our attention from the mouldering carcase within. Be not deceived; such characters may revel in the luxury, and self-blown consequence of to-day, but to-morrow the traveller passes by, and enquires where stood the stately mansion, or where rests its lordly owner? Accident has demolished the first: the grave has received the second; and, what is more awful to think upon, a JUDGMENT awaits him!

So much for the efficacy of mere wealth without benevolence. Such are the fruits of those things of which we are ashamed.

We are now to consider the voluptuary and sceptical: although on *such* it will not be material to bestow many remarks, or to direct our attention for any length of time.

Assuredly these characters must be ashamed, upon reflection, of the transactions in which they were formerly engaged. For,

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let me appeal to any one of them (although I can hardly suppose that such should be here found) what credit is to be obtained from crushing and overwhelming the weak, from enthralling the sanguine, and inveigling the innocent? What consolation can it be to hear the reproaches of those whose principles they have poisoned, and whose peace of mind they have dissipated for ever? Will it be said that one moment's intoxicating delight amply compensates for an age of wretchedness?—that one fleeting, short-lived draught of human sensuality, sweetens the cup of years of anguish? Oh, no! it is not thus. It is not so—if we look around and view the emaciated form, the faded looks, and hear the desperate resolves, the bitter oaths, and the excruciating mental agonies which mark the death-bed of that poor creature who has been MURDERED by the SOPHISTRY of man! Away then, my brethren, with every sentiment which can give encouragement to profligacy, or palliate vice! Away with every doubt, and every chimera, which can lead you to foster, for one moment, the principles, or to exhibit the conduct of a SCEPTIC.

I am now, in the third and last place, to shew the *consequences* of these things with

those who indulge in them—"the end of these things, says the Apostle, is *death*."

If, to the term of death, we could affix a *limited* meaning, and suppose that it was merely a suspension, or extinction, of the animal faculties—or that, like the heathenish notion, the grave was to *end* all our sorrows and cares—then the wicked might not feel any great compunction for "the wickedness that he hath committed:" then such characters might all exclaim with the riotous and profane, "let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die."

But if, as I humbly conceive, and perhaps you will agree with me, the term death, as used by the Apostle, has a very extensive and awful meaning, applying to a state of future condemnation and misery, then it becomes us all to think most seriously of the consequences of indulging in those pursuits, in which we find no fruit, and of which we are heartily ashamed. Then, my brethren, it becomes, not only a bounden duty, but a point of every moment's necessity with us, so to put a seal upon our tongue, and a guard upon our actions, as may enable us to walk through this vale of misery and tears, in a manner the most correct, upright, and exem-

plary—to avoid every appearance of evil and, if possible, to give no handle to censure or suspicion.

Then, the spotless purity of Christ's life comes to our remembrance, and the imitation of it, for us to put in practice : and if we act according to such impressions, rely upon it that we shall have abundant fruit in those things, of which, upon reflection, we can *never* be ashamed. Be assured it is among the greatest blessings which God Almighty permits his creatures to enjoy, to think upon their past lives with complacency and satisfaction.

Hasten, therefore, if you have hitherto felt *sorrow* or *shame* in such a retrospective view, hasten to feel tranquillity and comfort—by leading a life conformably to the precepts of the Gospel, and the doctrines of the Apostle. Let adversity be ever so keen, if your misfortunes have not arisen from your *crimes*, you will feel a solace upon reflection, which it is not in the power of mere prosperity to bestow.

Bidding adieu to the follies of the past, spring forward to your future good. Looking with pity and contempt on the baubles and shadows which used once to occupy your fancy, and employ your time, resolutely strive


to run the good Christian race which is set before you—and with a reliance on the merits of Christ Jesus, you shall, in the end, instead of *shame* and *death*, rise to bliss and life immortal!

SERMON XXI.

1 JOHN iv. 7.

Beloved, let us love one another.

IF there be one distinguishing characteristic more than another, whereby the excellency of Evangelical precepts is recognised as differing from those of Pagan doctrine, it consists in the recommendation and enforcing of that precept, or virtue, which is enjoined in the words of my text. Jesus Christ came down from heaven to take upon him our likeness, fashion, and infirmities, in order, amongst other great objects of his ministry, to inculcate *peace* and *good will* towards men. These were the words chaunted by the attendant spirits who ushered the intelligence of his birth to an astonished world ; and this was the precept which he strove unceasingly to enforce during his abode with us : telling us to “ LOVE ONE ANOTHER : ” to forgive each



other : and to be merciful and kind, according to our means and opportunities.

The Disciple and Apostle, from whose Epistle the text is taken, was, of all those occupied in the service of their gracious Master, the most distinguished for his engaging simplicity and amiableness of character. St. John was in particular selected by our Saviour as the partner of his most intimate sorrows and joys. He received him into his bosom. His whole soul, if one may indulge in expressions adapted to finite beings, should seem to have been laid open to his favourite and affectionate disciple. Accordingly, the Gospel of St. John is pre-eminently marked for all those tender and interesting touches of familiar dialogue, and benevolent sentiment, which are not to be found, in an equal degree, in the Gospels of his fellow disciples and Evangelists. If we wish to meditate upon the delightful maxims of christianity, clothed in language the most perspicuous, and directed to objects the most salutary, we must read the *Gospel according to St. John*—for in this composition, every thing appears to have been uttered in the most frank and undisguised manner, during the private and uninterrupted meetings of our Saviour and

the Apostles. My brethren, we know full well that, when the dearest friends are alone with each other—when the prying curiosity and wearisome turmoil of a suspicious world are beyond the power of molesting us—we know that we naturally impart to each other the particular hopes and fears, anxieties and apprehensions, sentiments and professions, which arise in our minds, and which press, as it were, upon our hearts for utterance. In these moments, we not only acknowledge the comfort of being thus secluded and assembled together, but we acknowledge the comfort of *loving one another*: of giving and receiving that kindness and friendly assistance, which the Apostle inculcates in the words of the text.

Undoubtedly, if we could suppose that it might have been permitted us to witness the heavenly society of our Saviour and his beloved disciples—if we could have witnessed all the tender reciprocities, equally free from weakness and disingenuousness, which must have passed between them—and yet more, if we could have heard their engaging dialogue—and particularly the sublime morality and irresistible arguments of HIM who directed and animated the whole—what

would have been our sensations!—how complete, and yet how indescribable, our happiness!

But, we have no possible reason or ground of complaint against the parsimonious decrees of heaven, in shutting out from our view those maxims of benevolence and love, which were interchanged between our blessed Saviour and his disciples. The Gospel of St. John, as was before observed to you, contains some of the most touching and inviting sentiments upon this head—and the *Epistles* of the same favourite disciple form a *counterpart* of his Gospel; for you observe in them one continued, unvarying strain, of the same meekness, affection, and Christian-heartedness—which form the principal materials of his previous compositions.

This course of observation brings us now to the words which are taken from these epistles: and they are these. “Beloved, let us love one another.” Now listen to the reason of this exhortation: “for love is of God. And every one (the Apostle goes on to say) that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God.” And now observe the important conclusion—“for GOD IS LOVE.” St. John had already told


us that love was of God—he now says, that *God himself is love*. The spirit and the application of these words, are surely of importance sufficient to employ a few minutes of our serious attention. But before my own efforts are directed to their illustration, listen yet farther to the close and impressive elucidation of them by the Apostle. “In this (continues St. John,) was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein (as the inspired author might well affirm) herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.” And now mark, I entreat you, his powerful appeal to the flock which he addresses—an appeal, which every sincere pastor of Christianity must make with peculiar earnestness to his *own* flock—“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

Who has the ingenuity—I ought rather to have said, who has the effrontery—to deny the forceful conclusion of this interrogatory? You see, my brethren, from the scope of these words considered collectively, that that great and good Being who hath animated us

with life and reason—before whom all creation bows in fearful and grateful homage—who bringeth the wind out of his treasures—who is omniscient, and omnipotent—that awful and mighty Being, or Spirit, or God, “Jehovah, or Lord,” is represented to us as being the fountain—of love: mercy: truth: compassion: as being even LOVE and BENEVOLENCE ITSELF. He is, it is true, a just and a jealous God—but he is also goodness and affection united. The Apostle therefore does not hold him up to our observation, as some of the Pagan poets and writers did *their* principal deity—brandishing his bolts, and darting his lightnings, and threatening an astonished world with terror and desolation! No: *our* God, who made the thunder to roll upon Sinai’s mount, is described as a God of all mercy and compassion: as ready to wash the scarlet die of our sins into a colour as white as snow. Do you ask for the *proof* of this affection? St. John tells you it consists in “loving us”—not as any *return* for the love we have borne to him—but in loving us by sending his own and tenderly beloved Son to be a propitiation for our sins—to be bruised for our transgression—and to bear upon his

own meek and unoffending head, the accumulated iniquities of the world. Greater love than this, you will allow, no man hath seen, or shewn, at any time: for who, among you, would *deliberately* sacrifice the child of his bosom for the preservation of another man's life? Such is weak human nature—we could not possibly exhibit the heroic virtue of such a sacrifice.


Now says the apostle, in conclusion, “Beloved—if God so loved us, we ought also to love another.” And surely, if that awful and almighty Being, compared with whom we are but as dust and ashes, hath condescended to admit us to an intimate degree of acquaintance with him, and to be sharers of his pure and perpetual love—what have we to say to each other, living, generally speaking, in the same sphere and condition with each other—standing in need of each other's help—and knowing our manifold wants and miseries when deprived even of human aid—what have we to say, wherefore we should not, sincerely and constantly, “love one another?” wherefore we should not put away all strife, and wrath, and evil speaking, and with meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one



another in love—endeavouring, in fact, (as St. Paul so strongly puts the case) to keep “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace ? !”

Having devoted a considerable portion of your time and attention, to what may be called a general illustration of the meaning and argument comprehended in the words of my text, it remains to devote the latter part of this Discourse to a few pertinent and practical remarks, which seem unavoidably to grow out of such an illustration.

Men are influenced in their conduct according to certain motives and consequences. These motives are sometimes not duly weighed, nor are the consequences clearly foreseen. If, in directing your steps along a certain way, into which you have been led by its supposed pleasantness and salubrity, you find, on a sudden, briars and thorns, and other obstructing objects, you recede: this, say you, cannot be the pleasant and delightful road which has been described in such flattering language; let me turn, and direct my steps to a more alluring path. Now, my brethren, the application is obvious enough. All are desirous of walking in the way of life; which is generally described as fruitful and delectable. Some tell us, perse-



vere, notwithstanding a few momentary obstacles—do not be dismayed at broils and quarrels, and feuds and opposition—persevere only ; and you will eventually find the pleasure predominate over the pain. That this advice is sometimes *given*, I most verily believe : that it is *acted upon*, is also a position to which assent may be readily given ; but that, if *persevered* in, the pleasure will predominate over the pain, is an assertion which every good, and honest, and wise man, will most pertinaciously deny. For, what is the amount of such advice ?—what, in short, is meant under this specious and glosing counsel ? It is, “ never mind in what quarrels you engage, or to what commotions and bickerings your heedless conduct may give rise—persist, persevere only ; and you shall surmount such difficulties with triumph and success.”

Heaven defend us, against such boisterous and head-strong counsel !—but heaven *does* defend us against it, in the language of the Gospel—when it says, “ Beloved, let US LOVE ONE ANOTHER.” A new, but a most important commandment, says the Saviour of the world, I give unto you—“ that ye love one another.”

Let us now see what are some of the principal *obstacles* to the exercise of this brotherly love. First, there is PRIDE ; which corrodes our hearts, and blinds our understandings. This passion, which is instilled into us by the basest and most contemptible of all principles, this passion rules us with a pleasing and powerful dominion. We cherish it so long and so cordially—we bow down to this idol of our creation with so much willingness and complacency—we sit and repose near the fire, and exclaim, in the language of the prophet, “ Ha, I am warm!”—while a fellow creature, born like ourselves for immortality, is knocking at our gates — and demanding only temporary shelter ere it lie down its head at our threshold, and breathe its last in the cold air of heaven!—Now here, THE GOSPEL, in the language of St. John says, “ Go and *administer relief* to that poor, pitiable human being—shew your *love*, by shewing your *compassion* : teach him what a glorious thing it is to be kind hearted, and charitable—and feel, and acknowledge yourself, that it is really “ more blessed to give than to receive.” Chance, and not your own merit, may probably have raised you above the wretch who implores your alms at the gate : but recollect,

of how little avail will the plea of *merit itself* alone be, when we all stand up for judgment before the seat of Christ! Love each other, therefore: and shew the superiority of your *situation*, by the superiority of a *benevolent conduct*.

Another obstacle to the exercise of that love, recommended in the words of my text, is, a *suspicious* and *envious disposition*.

To suspect positive evils, from the display of venial foibles, is the trait, not of an affectionate, but of a hateful and distrustful character. No peace of mind can exist where this feverish jealousy and suspicion prevail. We may fancy that there may, in fact, be absolute ills—but who made us judges of each other in such cases? Has no mote blinded our own eye-sight? Have we never, and even more glaringly, erred in a similar predicament? Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. Enough will be the wretchedness of the delinquent, when his crime is detected, and his enormities made known. Strive we, on the contrary, to mitigate his woes: to stand between him and his judge: and to restore peace and harmony to an agitated bosom and a distracted family. Here we shew the force of the Apostle's precept; for

here we effectually shew our love for each other.

A third obstacle has been mentioned to the exercise of evangelical benevolence; and that is, ENVY. Why are we envious—and to what acquisitions will this envy lead? The road of life is short, narrow, and rugged—and we envy a person, who, by his superior understanding or superior virtues, or by his painfully-earned good fortune, ease, and comfort, is enabled to walk along it with comparatively less pain and anxiety. What is this malevolence, therefore, but a fiend-like principle—impolitic and preposterous as it is wicked?—for it neither benefits ourselves, nor diminishes that felicity in others at which we are so provoked.

Dreadful and pitiable is that man's case, who is determined never to love, but to envy, his neighbour. His heart is corroded by the canker of care. No evening sheds slumber upon his eyes, no morning wafts fragrance to his senses. The volume of creation is dark and closed to that man's capacities: or it exhibits colours the most gloomy and repulsive. Fear is his companion: hatred is also his attendant: and misery and anguish enclose him in their baneful embrace.

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A fourth, and the last, obstacle which I shall here notice, to the exercise of that LOVE so beautifully described and so forcibly inculcated by the Apostle, is, the indulgence of a *passionate, wrathful, and unforgiving disposition*. Gracious God!—what are we, that we should thus shew that indignation towards a fellow mortal—who hath merited no reproach from us—when thou hast withheld thine own indignation against us, who are constantly and audaciously offending! Thy decrees, like the dews of thine own heavens, descend upon us in softness. Thy sun shines upon the just and the unjust—and yet *we* are fierce in anger, and eager to revenge! O the impotency and the wickedness of our enmities and animosities! Oh, that our minds could be tempered with wisdom, and our hearts softened by love! Let us only look a little way before us. There stands our sepulchre!!—and where will *then* be our blind fury and boisterous implacability? View the tombs of those who have set the world in flames by their fierce passions—and see how quiet, how fearless, how unpitied, they repose! Away, therefore, with anger, my brethren. If the sun, this evening, shall set upon the wrath of any one here present, let

him make haste, when it gladdens the earth to-morrow with its beams, to seek reconciliation and amity—and be in peace and brotherly love with each other as long as ye live!

I have now examined a few of the principal obstacles to the exercise of that love recommended by the Apostle in the words of my text; and I close this examination and my discourse, by beseeching and entreating you to avoid them ALL. It is in the power of every one so to act. We may, and can, and ought to, love one another: even as our heavenly Father hath evinced his love for us, by sending down his beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, that, we, through his sufferings, might be saved from everlasting perdition. But remember—our affection for each other will cost us no sacrifice of the kind. No blood need flow: no privations be experienced: no hardships be endured—but the operation of affection towards *others* tends to the best of effects in *ourselves*—in producing comfort, peace of mind, tranquillity of hope, suavity of disposition, and the most perfect happiness which, I verily believe, it is in the power of this world to bestow.

SERMON XXII.

PSALM xxxvii. 38.

Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last.

THE holy scriptures abound with exhortations to virtue and to happiness. In no compositions of profane or even christian authors, however brilliant for wit, or captivating for language, will there be found so many strong so many persuasive and obvious arguments, for the attainment of happiness here, and for a well-grounded hope of happiness hereafter. In the psalm from which my text is taken, the royal author seems to have been unusually animated with the subject under discussion. Equally convinced of the triumph of virtue, and downfall of vice, he encourages those, who may be drooping under unexpected adversity, with the strongest assurances of the final happiness of such who walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, but take delight

in the law of the Lord. "I have been young," says he, in the 28th verse of the psalm, "and am now old—and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread."

If therefore (he may be supposed to have argued), if you wish to attain these comforts of the righteous—if you wish to be always upheld by Almighty God, and your seed never to beg their bread—"keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right; for that alone shall bring you peace at the last."

No one will deny that a death-bed of composure, and of a well grounded christian hope, is, of all earthly things, the most devoutly to be desired. While we have health, and prosperity, and distinction in this world, and while we are gratified by the reverence of some and by the admiration of others, we may not consider our latter ends in that just point of view wherein we shall eventually find that we *ought* to have considered it. But these habits of thought and of action must undoubtedly cease when the moment of dissolution approaches:—when our Almighty Creator, by the suggestions of our own *conscience*, bids us consider whether wealth and *admiration* alone can bring us "peace at the last."



A man may trifle with this awful subject when death is not immediately before his eyes, but when the summons for departure is peremptory and irreversible, then such a man can be a trifler no longer. Eternity approaches, and he shrinks into insignificance, terror, and apprehension. It shall be my object in this Discourse so to illustrate the words of the text, that we may be induced, from the line of conduct marked out for us to pursue, so to live, that when God Almighty is pleased to call us hence, we may "depart this life in his faith and fear."

In the first place, the text tells us to "keep innocency, and to take heed to the thing which is right." No one, with his senses awakened, can possibly plead ignorance of the meaning and tendency of this injunction. Every person, it is to be taken for granted, in this place of worship, has been instructed by the catechism of the church of England, "to hurt nobody by word or deed; to be true and just in all his dealings; to bear no malice nor hatred in his heart; to keep his hands from picking and stealing, and his tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slander." —These are the most obvious tenets which the liturgy of this country has very wisely

endeavoured to instil into the rising generations, whereby they may eventually obtain, what the psalmist means by, "PEACE AT THE LAST." Let us, therefore, make a few observations upon them.

And, first, "to keep innocency in our actions, let us keep innocency in our thoughts." Thoughts are the incentives to actions—and upon their proper government depends an immense portion of moral happiness. Wicked deeds arise from wicked resolutions. If we accustom our imaginations to wander at random upon every topic and every pursuit, if we put no restraint upon the excursions of fancy, but permit ourselves to be carried along by the impetuosity of our feelings, we shall certainly be the slaves of every ridiculous wish and preposterous desire. Nor let us suppose we can so controul our habits, that some conceptions only, and not others, are to occupy our minds. Like the horse, the imaginations of man is deceitful in things. Select any one, apparently the most virtuous of mortals, and from his bosom those questions relative to god, and such thoughts, such as christianity, which his founder entertained. Will he not, that he has never covered his countenance

mens' goods?—that he has only strove to keep under his carnal appetites by the most unimpeachable line of conduct? or that he has never, indeed frequently, encouraged those propensities, which, if gratified, would subject his character to the ignominy attached to the violation of the most sacred laws? Who can answer such queries in the prompt and fearless tone of chastity? Who can say he has uniformly strove to keep innocency in his thoughts? He who doth this, will not want innocency in his *actions*: for the former are the parents of the latter. From early youth, therefore, let us strive to put a guard upon our imaginations. We know, if we choose to speak the truth, when it is that we are indulging improper thoughts: and if we suppose that these are to be laid aside, and good ones to be taken up at pleasure, we are forming very erroneous notions indeed respecting the natural depravity of man's heart. Habits rule us with an uncontrollable dominion: and if to the greater part of those unhappy human beings who are sacrificed to their country's laws for acts of dishonesty or bloodshed, we were to put a few interrogatories respecting the *causes* of their present calamity, we should most frequently be answered that their *actions*

were the result of deeply concerted schemes, over which their *imagination*s had long brooded with fondness—and that the line between *thought* and *action* became at last so delicate and imperceptible, that they had passed *over* it unawares : and imagined themselves to be as yet only *contemplating* the perpetration of crime, while their very hands were imbrued in human blood ! My brethren, this is no over-charged picture of the deceitfulness of man's imagination : while, therefore, the BOOK OF GOD holds out subjects of reflection which are connected with our present and future happiness, let us bend our stubborn minds to a serious, deep, and anxious contemplation of such subjects ; and banishing those gross, and selfish, and pernicious ideas, which are connected with mere sublunary pursuits, let us press forward to the prize of a christian's high calling, and so secure " peace at the last."

In the second place, next to the improper indulgence of the imagination, let us not habituate ourselves to the commission of little *trifling irregularities* of conduct which we conceive the mere moralist may pardon. To say the least of such habits, they betray excessive mental weakness ; as if a perfectly

correct line of conduct were not as easily pursued as a capricious and occasionally deviating one. But, in truth, to speak of such fickleness, not as a mere moralist, but as an honest and fearless teacher of christianity, it is directly and absolutely pernicious : for, as was observed of the imagination, who shall say, *thus far* shalt thou go and no farther ? The mightiest rivers sometimes flow from the smallest fountain-heads. The hardened sinner, and the abandoned wretch, was formerly, perhaps, this thoughtless trespasser beyond virtue's rigid precincts. Some little indiscretions he could palliate :—some trifling deviations he could reconcile forsooth—but the habit of palliation and reconciliation has grown so far, and taken such deep root, that robbery and wrong are glossed over with some accommodating sentence, or approving sophism ; and actions of the blackest character are pretended to be justified, at a moment perhaps, when all professions are useless, and all importunity is unavailing !

And is it thus, my brethren, that we are to “keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right”—so that we may obtain “PEACE AT THE LAST ?” Will any man's mind, not absolutely frozen with insensibility, lead him

to draw a conclusion, that by the commission of *little sins*, and *barely venial errors*, he is qualified for preferring those claims, at the bar of omnipotence, which shall admit him to the society of "just men made perfect?" Can such a man solace himself with the wild and palpable delusion, that God Almighty, in the world to come, will make no distinction between sincerity and hypocrisy, honesty and dishonesty, a withering faith and an active and beneficent conduct?

On the contrary, let us, if we wish to partake, at the last and awful moments of dissolution, of that peace which the psalmist here so emphatically points out, and calls upon us to partake of, let us rigidly and constantly, in thought and in deed, put a proper value upon virtue and integrity; and believe me, that these only, through faith and hope in the merits of Christ Jesus, will give us "peace at the last."

Be assured that there is nothing in this world, as was observed at the opening of my discourse, to be put in competition with this peace. It passeth all human description, as it does all human understanding. *Peace*, wealth, connexion, every thing that *disturbs* us through life, avail us not in the *annihilation*

when the struggling spirit is disencumbering itself from this perishable mass of mortality. Place before our eyes every toy and every bauble which served to amuse us in the day dream of life—and then contrast them with the delightful reflection of having acted innocently and uprightly in our thoughts and actions—and which of these two do you imagine will the most administer to our consolation?

Say, ye—who speak not from mere fancy and supposition, but have witnessed those whom ye loved and respected depart from this mortal scene—say, whether to have peace at the last, be a vain or an unsubstantial thing? Have the assurances of a rational and well grounded faith, no power to enliven the chamber of disease or death? Have the surrounding relatives and friends no comfort infused into their sorrows—not one ray of hope which mitigates their afflictions—when they see those “whom their soul loved,” about to assert their freedom from all earthly bondage? But do not be satisfied only with *seeing*. *Hear* the testimonies of such, who, as you approach them to take a last farewell, will embrace you with that calm and settled hope, that tempered joy, that tranquillizing confidence, which the comforts of christianity, and the

reflection of having kept innocency, and taken heed to the thing that was right, have alone inspired. Ask them, what in life could induce them to wish to re-live their days—except it be the wish of KEEPING INNOCENCY? Not wealth—not power—not luxury—nor pomp, nor fame, nor learning—could draw from them one expression, or hint, of an anxiety about quitting this world. No: the spirit of a good man, at such a moment, cares for nothing but a communion with those better and immortal spirits that are waiting to waft his own into Abraham's bosom. Assuredly, there can be no one object here below so interesting, and at the same time so edifying and awful, as that which has been just placed before you. Consider for what purpose we are created. Ask yourselves for what ends life was infused into us by a gracious God, whose chief happiness must of necessity consist in seeing man, the image of himself, walking uprightly from his cradle to his grave—passing serenely into another and a more perfect state of existence! Perhaps, at the moment of such departure, we feel impressed with strong sensations to let *our* latter ends be like unto that—because we may justly conclude that a tranquillized spirit at the hour of death, will be among

the most probable tests of a happy meeting in heaven? These sensations take deep possession of us—for a time: when the world, and all its fascinations, and all its gilded trifles, soon dance before our imaginations: and the impression of the righteous man's latter end is by degrees erased from our recollection.

Be not deceived. Whoso acteth thus, lives without God in *this* world, and what is of more consequence, may live without him in the world *to come*. If we anticipate, as we ought to do, our latter end—and know how it becomes us to meet it—we shall take due heed to the psalmist's admonition: we shall keep innocency, and do the thing that is right. All else, in the great scale of everlasting justice, is but unprofitable dross.

There is no one present who can presume to predict what the recurrence of another sabbath may witness. The parent may be taken from the child—the brother from the sister—or the husband from the wife of his bosom. Let us each ask ourselves, whether we are prepared for this event? In other words, let us ask ourselves whether we have acted *innocently* and *uprightly*? If we have, God Almighty tells us, in the inspired language of the psalmist, that we shall have “peace at the last.”

Heaven indeed avert that a contrary fate should await us!—for in proportion to the transports of a blissful departure, would be the agonies of witnessing one, where there is no christian hope, and no confidence in the merits of him who lived and died for our everlasting salvation. May we all press these considerations deeply upon our hearts—and hence learn properly to appreciate the value of an innocent and a spotless life—and that as our departure from this world is irrevocably fixed—to be succeeded by an existence of millions of ages—let us steadily, but cheerfully and confidently, trust in the power, mercies, and merits of HIM, who is both able and willing to save: and, as an earnest of future and imperishable glory, that he will be pleased to vouchsafe unto us, in this world,

PEACE AT THE LAST.

SERMON XXIII.

GENESIS xxii. 7, 8.

And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, my father ! and he said, here am I my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood—but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering ?

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.

THE chapter, from which this interesting dialogue is taken, is perhaps of all those in the Old Testament the most remarkable for the event recorded in it, and the most affecting from the beautiful and natural manner in which that event is described. The three leading objects which impress themselves on our attention, are these : first, the inclination of God Almighty to tempt, or put to the test the fidelity of his servant Abraham ; secondly, the implicit obedience and unqualified faith of Abraham ; and, thirdly, the

dutiful, the meek, the cheerful acquiescence of Isaac in the dreadful deed which was to have been inflicted on him. All these points or topics will naturally arise in analyzing the chapter itself.


“ And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham,—and said unto him, Abraham — and he said, behold, here I am.” As much as if Abraham had observed, “ behold thy servant ; whatsoever command it pleaseth thy divine justice to impose upon me, or whatsoever be the object of this gracious visitation, behold, O Lord, I am here, thy servant, to obey !” And the Almighty said, “ Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah : and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” On the announcement of this dreadful command, which could have been little anticipated, it is remarkable that Abraham offers not the least reply : no kind of expostulation—no entreatment for mitigation of so severe a sentence—*seems to* escape his lips. Knowing that what *God* designs must be for the good of man, and *as* he had before said ; considering himself but as dust and ashes compared with his Maker,

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he, humbly, unconditionally, and promptly obeys. “ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son: and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then, on the third day, Abraham lift up his eyes and saw the place afar off.” We must suppose that this place was at a considerable distance from the spot in which God had conversed with him; and that, during this journey, Abraham’s mind must have been intensely occupied with meditating on the act which he was about to perpetrate on his only child:—the hope and comfort of his declining age. During this journey, there is every reason to believe that Abraham might have communicated to the child the object for which it was made: but that this communication was of a *general* nature—namely, that they were going to *sacrifice* in the usual manner of offering up burnt-offerings. When they had reached the spot, Abraham began to prepare himself for performing the heart-rending deed for which he had been sent:—but, as a preliminary step, and willing that no creature should be present to witness the sufferings of himself and child,

he said unto the young men, "Abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad (meaning Isaac) will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you." Now, then, the awful deed was about to be perpetrated: but still the innocent and inapprehensive mind of Isaac was not aware that he HIMSELF was to be the sacrifice which was to be immolated upon the altar. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son (that *he* might carry it to form the altar) and (in the usual manner observed in oriental sacrifices) he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together." The altar was to be erected at a little distance; but Isaac, not seeing any lamb to make the sacrifice with, naturally interrogated his father upon the subject. "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, 'My father?' - and he said here am I, my son." Then Isaac observed, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" As much as if he had said, "Lo, my father, we have journeyed thus far for the purpose of making a sacrifice in a particular spot which God hath pointed out; but now, having reached it, behold there is nothing to perform the sacrifice



with." The reply of Abraham forms one of those exquisite touches of human nature, which is better conceived than enlarged upon. He is conscious that within a few moments he must begin to put in practice the commands of the Deity:—but the feelings of a father still rend his bosom—and he has not yet the courage explicitly to declare to his son *what* is to be the substance of the sacrifice. He still avoids therefore a direct answer, keeping up the hopes and curiosity of the child. And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." This appears to have satisfied Isaac; for we find they went both of them together, without farther dialogue, to the important spot — that VERY SPOT, where, wonderful to relate, the SAVIOUR of the world was afterwards offered up a sacrifice, of sweet smelling savour, for the redemption of the sins of the world.

At length, Abraham and his son came to the place which God had marked out. "And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order." Now, the crisis had arrived: and we find that Abraham "bound Isaac his son, and laid *him* on the altar upon the wood." We may suppose that Isaac submitted to his



father with the same unhesitating readiness and placid resignation which Abraham evinced in listening to, and preparing to execute, the commands from God to offer him up. Yet a moment intervened : — and, while the beloved child of his bosom lay in dreadful expectation of approaching death, “ Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”

Just as the deed of slaughter was about to be committed—and while the uplifted arm of the parent was presenting the knife to be bathed in the life-blood of his son—the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham from heaven, and said, ‘ Abraham.’ And he said, “ here am I.” Again, therefore, a pause ensued ; and the child was again doomed to experience all the agonies of anticipation which he had before endured. The angel said, (no doubt to the rapturous ears of the father, and to the unutterable transport of the child) “ Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing to him ; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

You, my brethren, who have experienced the consolations of good fortune ; when adver-

sity—though this is but a feeble comparison—you, therefore, who have witnessed the child or children of your bosom stretched on the bed of disease, or afflicted in a manner so dreadful as to extinguish every reasonable hope of life—and have suddenly seen him revive, and be made whole, by the mercy of heaven—YOU ONLY can form any thing like an adequate idea of the joyful amazement, the exstatic transport, of the venerable Patriarch, on thus finding his son snatched from a bitter and premature death. With what unspeakable joy therefore did the same Patriarch lift up his eyes, and behold, behind him a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns: and first, unloosing his child, and comforting him from the mental agonies he must have recently undergone, we find that he went and took the ram, and “ offered *him* up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.” Thus ends the narrative respecting the intended sacrifice of Isaac.

And from this narrative, how various, how interesting, are the reflections which arise?

As was observed to you in the opening of this Discourse, let us first admire the unconditional submission of the Patriarch Abraham to the decrees of heaven—and not only let us

admire, but put it *in practice* in our own conduct.

God requires of us all, in the language of his beloved Son, the SACRIFICE OF SIN,—which is so hurtful to our soul's welfare. Do we perform this sacrifice with the same cheerfulness and alacrity that Abraham offered to sacrifice his son—"his only Son?" How numerous are the instances, wherein children are devoted to all the follies, all the absurdities, and all the fashionable vices of the age—and parents, with their senses awakened, either do not choose, or have not the good sense and fortitude sufficient, to *redeem* them from such career—because they know that it will cost many pains, and much heart-felt struggle and sorrow! And why, let me entreat, are such Parents thus ready to sacrifice to Baal, rather than to God?

Sometimes heaven imposes on parents, as tests of their fidelity and resignation, very severe domestic afflictions; and they have not the piety nor the confidence of Abraham to acquiesce in such a visitation. It is very easy to express our faith, and our submission to the divine will, in prosperity; and we may impose upon ourselves by the supposed magnanimity of our resolutions, and by the uncon-

ditional surrender of our feelings and hopes to the will of God. But let the hour of adversity arrive—let the child of our bosom be stricken with infirmity—let the voice of heaven command us to sacrifice “our son, our ONLY SON”—and what will be our feelings *then?*

Do we consider that the merit of hope and of faith is shewn only in the afflicting moment of human misery?—and that while friends flatter, and fortune smiles, it is easy to make professions, and express our fortitude should the day of adversity ever arrive!

But, my brethren, it is only in that VERY DAY OF ADVERSITY—it is only when heaven proves us by visiting us with afflictions—that the character of a Christian, and the fortitude of a martyr, are to be shewn. No night is so dark as to be impervious to some glimmering ray of light:—no sea so vast, as not to be terminated by land, and to present some friendly harbour to our tempest-shattered bark:—no wretchedness so desperate, as to forbid the smile of hope, and to banish the comforts of faith. The God that created us to worship and bless his holy name—the Saviour, who by the agonies of crucifixion and death, hath redeemed us from the pains of

hell — these are too potent and too merciful to suffer us to sorrow as men without hope. Let us, therefore, upon all occasions—with thanksgiving in prosperity, and resignation in adversity—draw near to such good and gracious sources of succour ; and let each of us, in the language of the blessed Mary, exclaim, “ behold thy servant, be it unto me according to thy word :” —being strongly convinced that God himself will provide us with every means, as he did Abraham, to bring us through every difficulty. He who created, can save ; he who smites, can heal ; he who commands, should be obeyed.

In the last place, call to mind what are the rewards of faith and confidence in God. You are heavily afflicted ; you have seen other and better days ; you have lost many affectionate relatives and friends ; and you think that there is not one single prospect in the world which affords you comfort to contemplate. Be it so. Still you have a protector in God, and a comforter in Christ. You may always, if you cultivate the seeds of christian virtue, and have a lively faith and belief in the promises of the BIBLE—your soul may always, with the holy female character before alluded to, “ magnify the Lord, and your spirit re-

joyce in God your Saviour." Behold, at the very moment when you think affliction remediless, and misery insurmountable, you look up, as Abraham did, and the angel of mercy tells you of some friend who is coming to relieve your sufferings:—or bids the disease, which hath afflicted your child and baffled the physician's art, to depart; or gives you an unequivocal, an indisputable, earnest of that happiness which awaits the good beyond the grave.

What, let me entreat you to consider, what is the use of moral and religious instruction, day after day, or Sabbath after Sabbath, inculcated in places of worship, if, when it pleases God to tempt or try your fidelity, you do not, as Abraham did, instantly and unfeignedly, put in practice the injunctions of heaven? As the knowledge of medicine enables the physician to apply such remedies as may restore the diseased body, so the knowledge of christian truths and christian faith will enable us, if we *choose* to apply it, to heal the wounds of an afflicted and distressed spirit.

As Abraham therefore obeyed God, and as Isaac obeyed his father Abraham, in the execution of a decree, the most awful and dis-

gressing to the feelings of both parent and child—so let us, who are children of one and the same Almighty and all-merciful Father, cheerfully listen to the dictates which the wisdom of such a parent prescribes, and with alacrity put in practice the particular object which it enforces. And rely upon it, that in the end, we shall witness the triumph and consolation of FAITH. We shall perceive, that HE is blessed who questions not the decrees of heaven; but who, like Abraham, looks up to God to provide means of refuge in every difficulty, and objects of comfort in every calamity.

Then, may we anticipate something like those consoling assurances which the angel held out to the Patriarch—“By MYSELF have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore — because thou hast OBEYED MY VOICE.

This, my brethren, is the reward of obedience and faith. We *know* these things, happy shall we be if we *do* them.

SERMON XXIV.

GENESIS xlv. 24.

See that ye fall not out by the way.

THESE words were spoken by Joseph to his brethren, when he dismissed them out of Egypt, laden with presents for their father, who tarried in the land of Canaan. It seems that the father, disconsolate for the loss of Joseph, and ashamed at the ignominious treatment which he had received, sent all his sons, while they provided themselves with corn against the famine which raged in the land, to make an ample retribution and acknowledgement to their brother, for the injuries they had inflicted on him.

The meeting of Joseph and his brethren, in Pharaoh's house, is perhaps the most beautiful and touching picture of domestic sorrow and sympathy that is any where on record:—and the peculiarly delicate, yet forcible manner, in which the conduct of Joseph is de-

scribed, cannot be held up, too frequently and too forcibly, to your admiration and imitation.

The Chapter, from which my text is taken, opens with Joseph's making himself known to his brethren. He commands every man, except his brothers, to go out from him—he wishes to be alone with them—that none may witness his tears, save only those into whose bosoms they are to be poured. He can hardly refrain himself before them all — and on the departure of the strangers, he frankly and unreservedly tells his brethren that he is *indeed* their BROTHER JOSEPH. “And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.” He no sooner makes the discovery of himself, than he exclaims, “Doth my father yet live?” See, here, one of the most affectionate traits of filial duty, and at the same time one of the most exquisite touches of dialogue! Observe, too, how sharp and stinging the question is; and how it probes the bosoms of those who are conscious that they have done wrong! What is the reply made to this question? “And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence.” Why were they troubled? Because they knew how guilty they had been of falsehood and treachery, both to father and brother.

It will not be necessary, for an explanation of the words of my text, to dwell longer upon the discovery of Joseph. A word or two only remains to be said about the circumstances which gave rise to the admonition of "not falling out by the way."

By the interest of Joseph, Pharaoh consents that his brethren should depart into Canaan, laden with the corn of Egypt; and Joseph adds an entreaty that they should take waggons to return with their wives and their little ones. He also supplies them with an abundance of raiment—and to his father, in particular, he sent "ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn, and bread, and meat for his father by the way." Thus provided, and ready to depart, Joseph takes an affectionate leave of them; and he says unto them, in the words of my text, "see that ye fall not out by the way:" that is, be careful that there be no bickerings, nor illwill, nor violence between you: but be unanimous in assisting, and consoling, and loving, one another. He knew from his own woful *experience*, the litigiousness of their dispositions; and he therefore very wisely gives them this piece of advice on their departure.

Having thus explained the circumstances which gave rise to the words of the text, I shall next, by God's blessing, endeavour to make them instrumental to your edification, by considering them in a more comprehensive point of view than they were regarded by their author. What was meant, in the text, *by the way*—that is, *the way from Egypt to Canaan*—I shall consider as the *road of human life*—the great and important HIGH-WAY that leads from TIME to ETERNITY :—and in this way, my brethren, most earnestly do I beseech you “not to fall out:”—not to be contending with, and thwarting each other, by the indulgence of petty malice, or by the commission of criminal acts.

Let us suppose the case of a superior being, shewing us, from an eminence, this great way, or road of human life—to some, short; to others, of longer continuance. “Look, (might he be supposed to address us) contemplate yonder the extent of human existence. See how short, and how strait the path is, if mortals *choose* to walk in it, and yet into how many angles they deviate, and with what bushes and thorns these deviations are overgrown. Into which way would you direct your steps? Into the *strait* and *direct*, will

be the reply:—and yet, so contrary and so perverse is human nature, that it will instantly forget its resolutions, and strike off into those paths which are choked with briars and brambles, or which abound with inconveniences and unseemly sights. To drop the metaphor. Life is short; but though short, it may be rendered more pleasant and sufferable, if men would only study—“not to fall out by the way:”—not to distress themselves, and more particularly others, by being guilty of acts of meanness, slander, folly, or crime. Strange indeed are our dispositions and habits—when we know that our time of abiding here is short, yet we cannot render it, short as it is, productive of our mutual comfort and happiness. We rather PREFER *falling out* by the way.

Those, who have been represented as choosing to walk among paths entangled with thorns, and refreshed by no cheering sights, or fragrant smell—are those who are constantly upon the rack to discover the frailties of human nature, and to magnify venial errors into unpardonable crimes, by giving them a general and an unqualified propagation. Are many such quarrelsome comrades on life's way to be met with? Ask your own hearts,

appeal to your own experience, my brethren, and you will best know whether the observation be founded or not upon fact.

Now, contrasted with this, compare the conduct of our blessed Saviour. How ready was he to pardon, and to put a favourable construction upon irregularities of conduct, in which the body, rather than the spirit, sinned! And yet we look to HIM as the author and finisher of our faith, and as the judge who is to pass sentence upon us at the latter day—and we sometimes console ourselves that we have trod in his footsteps, and imitated his example. In truth, we make our excuses readily enough to *ourselves*; and in private we are all humility, and contrition, and supposed excellence; but we mix afterwards with mankind, and continue to be guilty of calumny and persecution—in short, we do nothing *but* fall out by the way.

True it is, that human nature is frail, and liable to constant acts of error and aggression: but it is not less true, that the Almighty hath given us reason to know right from wrong, and to attemper and subdue the workings of a quarrelsome or revengeful disposition, by acts of mildness and of mercy. Gracious God!—with what malevolence, and

how stubbornly bent upon mischief, do *some* human characters appear to be walking in the way of life! ? How disposed to watch the deviations, and to exult in the downfall of their fellow creatures! The poor wretch, who lies bleeding from affliction, in the way—upon whose whole limbs scarcely a tattered garment is thrown—is upbraided for his weakness, and trampled upon for his loathsomeness . . . and what are the virtues and pretensions of *him*, who thus arrogates to himself a superiority over this despised object? His ancestors have left him a name, ennobled by their *own* virtues—and wealth acquired by their *own* industry—which he arrogates to *himself*, and fancies himself the lordly tyrant of the day. Thou fool, says the language of holy writ, “this night shall thy soul be required of thee.” May all those, to whom such a suggestion is imparted, be shook from their entrancement; and be prepared to avert the sad result to which such conduct must lead, by a sincere and heart-stricken atonement.

The foregoing are among the most striking exemplifications of “falling out by the way.” These examples shew, from the beginning to the end of life’s journey, a *determination* to be cruel and revengeful: a determination even,

which sometimes the near and sure prospect of dissolution is incapable of diverting. Heaven grant that no such determination may mark the conduct of those who are near and dear to any of us here assembled.

Instances of falling out by the way may be adduced of quite an opposite description. We begin life's journey as *friends*; we approach the conclusion of it as *enemies*. To what is such a difference of opinion and conduct to be imputed? To jealousy, to irritability, to selfishness, and to a want of a generous and just perception of men and things. It must arise from some one of these, unless provoked by acts of personal violence and gross insult. Let us ask such, who are thus separated from each other on life's journey, whether they find the way more pleasant, less intricate, and less productive of inconveniences? In other words, is hostility or union the more enviable state of the two? Both will probably acknowledge that they were happier as *friends*: and yet, they are *resolved* to continue "falling out by the way,"—even to the end of it: that is to say, one has not generosity, liberality, or common sense sufficient to acknowledge the errors that are past,

and to hope for their being forgiven and forgotten.

My brethren, this state of existence is bad enough in *any* condition : but how acutely painful, and generally productive of harm it is, when it arises from the closest of *all* bonds of union and attachment—I mean, the relative situation of *man and wife*—when those who have plighted their troths at the altar, in the face of God and man, to love, support, comfort and sustain each other, in sickness and in health, till death separates them—when *such* fall out by the way, how mischievous are most frequently the effects of it?!

Not only is Society at large injured by every such disunion, but to the *offspring*, to their own families in particular, think upon the cruel consequences that ensue. Of all instances of falling out by the way of life, none perhaps are pregnant with more heart-breaking miseries than that under consideration : and yet, if one takes a view of society in its *present* state, these instances do not appear to be diminishing in number, or to be productive of less baneful consequences.

Is it not greatly surprising, I ask you, that human nature, which has but to tread a *few*

steps, as it were, from the CRADLE to the GRAVE, should be thus addicted to render those steps irregular and harassing, by the indulgence of weak or wicked principles? Some, contrary to Joseph's bright example, are resolved NEVER to be reconciled with their brethren. Let them think, say, or do, what they will, no approbation follows. And wherefore?—because the ridiculous pride and *dignity of human nature* would be insulted. Alas! for the dignity of human nature. These are the words which flow from the lips of one, who sprung from the dust of the earth, and into that dust must be speedily resolved: whose vile body the worms are shortly to devour, and whose name, by the wise and the good, will as surely be had in ridicule or abhorrence. So short-sightedly do *some* people walk in life's way. So contrary to every principle of common sense, justice, and humanity, do they congratulate themselves on the supposed sagacity of their resolutions, and on the supposed success by which those resolutions are followed up.

There is yet one other, and the last instance which I shall name, by which we show a foolish and fatal determination to quarrel by the way of life—and it is this. God has endued us

with some portion of what is called *intellectual attainment*, and we are resolved to exercise it in writing down all that is excellent and commendable in human characters. Instead of directing it to the mild, and amiable, and profitable ends to which heaven has designed it to be directed, we take pleasure, too frequently, in making it the instrument of calumny, perfidy, or licentiousness. We snatch up the pen in acrimony and haste. We pour forth our immethodical effusions ; and although every passage abounds with glaring incongruities, or palpable falsehoods, we congratulate ourselves on their supposed merit, and exult in the anticipation of the effects which are to be wrought from them. Our leaves are scattered to the wide world ; and we know that what is *new* will be *seen*, and what is *personal* will be perused : for censure, and slander, and ridicule, are among the most powerful causes which shake our better parts, and poison our purer principles. But let us ask the *most successful* of these intellectual characters, what is the nature and amount of their happiness ? They have seduced the innocent : they have contaminated the young and virtuous mind, by giving it a bias to scepticism in matters of morality as well as of religion : they have over-

awed the timid, and silenced the diffident : or (what does not unfrequently happen) they have blasted the happiness, by undermining the faith, of ONE, who had been alive to every unsophisticated feeling! They have converted light into darkness, and goodness into wickedness. They have seen all their ends answered : and now, what is the vast importance of it to themselves? They reap not one single grain of comfort, or of reputation—at least, of that reputation which a truly wise man knows how to appreciate. And when the moment of departure comes to them—when they see *themselves* about to make the *last* step in *life's* way—can they turn round and receive the *applause* of those, in favour of whom they have wrought success?—or rather, will not the very hands, which once might for a moment have been lifted up with admiration, be elevated to heaven to bring down vengeance and disaster upon the betrayer's head!?

Thus have I endeavoured to show, in a few striking instances, how prone men are to “fall out by the way ;” and the mischievous effects which arise from a disposition to slander, to criminate, to persecute, loath, and reprobate. I have also shown that the way of life, being

short, and capable of being rendered direct, and easy, and safe, should be sought after by all with a disposition to make it instrumental to each other's comfort and happiness. In conclusion therefore, let us call to mind the reasonable admonition of Joseph to his brethren ; and let us apply it to ourselves as we mingle in life's short journey : for, short as it is, it is apt to be obscured and saddened, and even rendered shorter, by disaster, misfortune, and affliction unavoidable. These assuredly we cannot *prevent* : but they may be *alleviated* during their continuance by the exercise of a friendly, a kind, and a charitable temper. Accident, disease, and death, these walk in the way of life, nor can they be prevented from making their approaches : but, if we have shown mercy to others when they have been attacked, that mercy, it is reasonable to hope, will be always extended to us. If we have not voluntarily quarrelled with others "by the way," we may expect, at least from the good, the honest, and the wise, to meet with the same friendly treatment in return.

Thrice blessed are they, who thus unceasingly labour to keep down the evil dispositions of human nature in themselves, and to diminish or divert the ill effects of it in

others!—into whose minds the pure principles of virtue and christian benevolence have been instilled by good parents and teachers, and who have shown the best return for such kindness, by propagating, among their brethren, the same admirable principles. These are not the self-willed, the captious, and the quarrelsome, who plant thorns in the way of life; but, on the contrary, they render it pleasant and heart-cheering by succouring the distressed, by fortifying the weak, and by being comforters of the “desolate and oppressed.” These, if they propagate their opinions, show no disposition to slander, or sarcasm, or invective: for, conscious in themselves, after all, of the weakness and fickleness of poor human nature, they are anxious to speak favourably of venial errors, and to point to the ardent and enterprising spirit, the only road to complete and virtuous success.

They know, that in a few revolving years, the greater part of those, with whom they *started* on life’s road, will be swept away by the hand of death. Instances of mortality, or of human disaster, render not their spirits fierce; but, on the contrary, subdue or re-modify them; and at life’s last close, when there remains NOT ONE MORE STEP OF “THE WAY”

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to be taken, they sink down into the grave, as upon the bed which is to refresh them, by a sweet slumber, for the undisturbed and inexhaustible happiness of the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON XXV.

1 Cor. ix. 24, latter part.

So run, that ye may obtain.

It does not seem to require a very extensive knowledge of human nature to become acquainted with the propensities of mankind after novelty and pleasure. The uniform evidence, which the lives of the greater mass of society hold out, of the eagerness with which we follow any new pursuit, and of the reluctance with which we abandon any old one, connected with the gratification of our passions, seems amply to have justified the Apostle in calling the Christian a runner, who converts to higher and better pursuits. It is a life of sanctity, rather than a course, and to run a godly, rather than a carnal race, and so to run, that they might obtain the prize of an immortal and everhappy happy state of existence.

“So run, that ye may obtain” is not the language which every Christian minister can

to that flock about whose spiritual welfare he is solicitous. It shall be my endeavour therefore, in the present Discourse, first, to show *what* are the *objects* in this world which we are in general too anxious to obtain, and which must, in the end, be destructive of our best hopes and happiness: and, secondly, to call your attention towards running *that race* alluded to by the APOSTLE, and which alone can be productive of "peace at the last."

In the first place, then, let us suppose the case of a human being, gifted with a moderate but unadulterated portion of intellect, and with principles that not only teach him properly to distinguish right from wrong, but to *act* according to this distinction. Let us suppose him casting an attentive eye upon the ever-busy and ever-changing scene of life. He does not, perhaps, fully comprehend the scheme of Christian redemption; he may not even have read the Epistles of the Apostle from which my text is taken:—but he is, nevertheless, sufficiently sagacious to know vice from virtue, speciousness from sincerity, and falsehood from truth. In short, he has strong and distinct perceptions of what the moral conduct of a Christian ought to be.

What are his observations? He sees,

here, thousands of human beings "running" with alacrity, it is true — but *what* is the object of the race? The possession of WEALTH. They obtain it. Are they satisfied and happy? Do they distribute liberally to the poor branches of their families, or to the starving suppliant who knocks at their gate, and entreats to be fed only with the crumbs that fall from a table replenished to satiety? My brethren, can you be *surprised* if *neither* of these objects be in the contemplation of the purely rich man? Can grapes be gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? Can those who strive to run *such* a race, and obtain what they struggle for, be classed among the individuals whom the Apostle would designate as running a *Christian's* race? Judge for yourselves: and say, if you can censure the condemnation of a moralist who must reprobate such a perversion of intellect and of wealth. If you are anxious to run the rich man's race, be glad to distribute:—and make wealth the *means* rather than the *end*:—and so shall the poor in spirit, the meek, and the afflicted, write your names upon the tablets of their hearts, and teach their children to do the same after them.

Again. The same observer of human life

sees an equal number of individuals engaged in one incessant and breathless race after mere *worldly honours* and *emoluments*: and when he finds that the attainment of these things brings, in the end, only additional sorrows and anxieties—when he finds that these men are choaked with the cares of this life, which our Saviour has so forcibly compared to thorns and brambles—he is then convinced that this is *not* the race which a wise man should run:—and that it is not the toiling after such objects—it is not the wasting of our time, or the destruction of our temper, in such pursuits alone—which constitute the excellence of a human character, or the comfort of human existence. Ask the experienced votary in these things, whether his sleep be purer, or his person be safer, from the acquisition of all of them in their fullest extent? He will tell you that he enjoys neither the one nor the other: and that he alone can solace himself with rest and protection, whose principles have been grafted upon virtue, and whose conscience upbraids him not with wrong. This is the only armour, tempered as it must be with the favour of heaven, which can shield us from the dart of envy, of malice, and revengeful persecution. The observer

then of human life, such as we have imagined him to be, must see and be convinced that the race after *mere worldly honours and emoluments* is not the race which the Apostle, in my text, urges us to run.

Again. An almost equal number of human beings are ardent in the pursuit of the most trifling, or the most harassing and exhausting, *dissipation*. The zeal which stimulates the religious enthusiast to traverse immense tracts of country, and to endure the hardships of hunger, of thirst, and of fatigue—in order that he may witness some hallowed spot, or bear awaysome precious relic—is not greater than the zeal displayed by the votaries of *fashionable folly* in the race after distinction, applause, or sensual gratification. In truth, the imagination is frightened, and the heart sickens, at the thought of this monstrous perversion of time and talent :—of that time, which is given us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling ; of that talent, with which we are endowed for the comprehension of scriptural truths, and for making us more and more acquainted with our God. To every lover of goodness, of justice, of virtue, and of religion, how repulsive must be the race which *these* votaries are running !—

and how diametrically opposite to *that*, which the great Apostle of the Gentiles urges the Corinthians to pursue !

There is yet a fourth class of individuals, distinguished by this observer of human life, which seems to run a race still more contemptible and destructive than either of the foregoing. I mean, those of our fellow creatures, who are anxious to supplant the principles of virtue, of moral order, and of the Christian religion. These are to be the more dreaded, inasmuch as their approach is slow and concealed, and their efforts unremitting, under the most specious and plausible reasonings. They will not tell us of the precipice to which we are drawing near, till they have placed us, overbalanced, upon its very brink. Assuming the innocence of the dove, they infuse the venom of the serpent; and professing their admiration of morality, of order, and religion, they study only to surprise the heart in an unguarded moment, when it is to be sacrificed upon the altar of sensuality and of atheism. God, in his infinite mercy, guard us, and those who are near and dear to us, not only from engaging in *such* a race, but from having any *connection* or *acquaintance* with those who are active in it. It is not every

one who is gifted with resolution sufficient to withstand their insidious attacks ; or, to convert those, who are guilty of them, from wickedness to goodness. Shun, therefore, my brethren, the first *appearance* of such depravity in others, and suppress every *tendency* towards it in yourselves. The heart is, sometimes, a deceitful monitor :—deceitful, says the language of Holy Writ, above all things. In such a fearful crisis, therefore, and under such a temptation, pray earnestly to your heavenly Father for strength and succour; and learn to know, that *self-denial* is among the most difficult virtues for a human being to practice. But though it be difficult, it is glorious; — and is to be performed only in running that race which Christ and the Apostles have set before us.

Thus much for the first branch of argument into which my Discourse has been divided. I now come to the second and latter division of the subject: for, having pointed out to you what are *improper* pursuits for a Christian to be engaged in, it is right that I speak of some of those which *constitute the race* we are to run—in order that we may *obtain the prize* we seek after.

Perhaps, as an introduction to the subse-

quent remarks, it may be proper to quote the words of the Apostle. " Know ye not, (says he) that they which run in a race, run all, but *one* receiveth the *prize*? And every man that striveth for the mastery is *temperate* in all things. Now *they* do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but *we* an *incorruptible*! I therefore so run—not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away."

Now, the scope of this apostolical reasoning seems to be—that temperance, which means *chastity* as well as *moderation*, is one of the most essential qualifications for a Christian, in order that he may run that race by which he may obtain everlasting happiness.

All mankind, says the Apostle, are engaged in a race after some pursuit or other: but the prize can be allotted only to one. That is to say, those who are virtuous and pure in heart, who have a belief in the efficacy of Christ's redemption, and shew this belief by the tenor of their lives, those only obtain the prize of heaven. The characters who have been described to you, in the

former part of this Discourse, are they who wish to obtain a *corruptible* crown:—but, says the Apostle, very justly, “I, and all Christians, look for an incorruptible crown. So fight I, says he, not as one that beateth the air:”—that is, “such are my views, and hopes, and efforts, that I am confident they are neither *chimerical* nor *unavailing*. I know they are directed by proper motives, and that, in the end, they will be crowned by their merited reward. I stand therefore upon a rock:—and do not idly beat the air, as upon a slippery foundation.” He then goes on to tell us of the purity of his life, and of his bringing his body, and wandering thoughts, under subjection—“lest, (says he) that, after preaching to others, my *own* life should be so *immoral*, as to shut me out of the kingdom of heaven.” These latter words are of a character sufficiently solemn and touching: for as nothing can afford a purer solace to the upright minister of God’s word, than to see his flock improve in every Christian accomplishment and Christian virtue, so, agonising in proportion, would be the feelings of every honest heart in that flock, to witness such a casting away of their *Pastor!*—to witness that HE, by whose exertions they may in

a great measure have been taught to understand and to practise the precepts of the Gospel, should, at the last day of retributive justice, be forbidden to partake of the marriage feast of the Lamb. May this never be the ultimate lot of any of those who address you from this place! And may each of us, so strive to keep in mind the injunctions of the Apostle, that we may, through confidence in Him whose word we preach, and whose power is mighty to save, be finally admitted into the mansions of blessedness.

In conclusion:—let me earnestly exhort you, in the emphatic admonition of the Apostle, *so to run*—that ye may obtain the prize, which God, in the **BOOK OF LIFE**, calls upon you to strive for. And recollect, that the race is not always to the swift, nor the victory to the mighty. If the object of the race were not distinctly pointed out, and if the encouragements were not numerous and pressing, you might perhaps complain of a want of sufficient incitement:—but, as long as the Bible is intelligible to your capacities, and as earnestly as your pastors and teachers have instructed you to be acquainted with it, so would such a complaint, on your part, be considered as nugatory and preposterous.

Let it have a due influence upon your hearts, considering that the time allotted for this race is neither long nor certain:—but it may be long and certain enough to hold out to you some opportunities which may be devoted to the great purposes of Christian salvation. No higher object can the world present you with: no deeper concern can occupy your thoughts: and, surely, no sweeter enjoyment can any thing, on this side the grave, hold out for your gratification.

If, upon mature reflection, you should have *neglected* every past and fit opportunity for the exercise of such a race, redouble your speed, and make amends for former neglect. It is not (as I have shewn) with the merely rich, the worldly minded, the dissipated and profane, that you must associate—in running the race that is set before you, if you wish to obtain what the Apostle calls an “incorruptible crown of glory”—but with the humble, the sincere, the penitent, the benevolent, the forgiving, and the good. These are the characters—not much cloathed, it must be confessed, with worldly honours, or making boast of worldly success—but these are the characters to whom you must be assimilated, if you are seriously impressed with the im-

portance of running the race which the Apostle calls upon you to engage in:—and, if there be any virtue, any praise, or any honour, he entreats you to think upon these things.

Do not merely assent to them in the moment of Sabbatical worship, and drive them ever after from your recollection in your intercourse with the world. It is not *thus* that we can run the Christian's race:—and you deceive yourselves most grossly if you imagine it. The pageantry of this world, which is daily passing before our eyes, must soon close upon us for ever. Insignificant in itself, it nevertheless engages our attention, and we are emulous of adding to, or of speaking of it. But is this selfish gratification the *only* thing that ought to occupy our thoughts? And have we no account hereafter to render up to our Maker? Were we only created to be idle spectators, or feeble participators, of this world's excellence? Assuredly not. Our children, if we have acted well, will think with transport of our memories: our country, if we have aided it with our councils, or helped it in any measure with our exertions, will remember us with gratitude—and our God, if we have walked humbly and

truly before him — if we have been active at the call of virtue, and strenuous in running the **CHRISTIAN'S RACE**—will call us hereafter to witness the fullness of his glory, and to sit down at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore!

SERMON XXVI.

2 CHRON. ix. latter part of 6th verse.

Behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me—for thou exceedest the fame that I heard.

THESE were the words uttered by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, on her visit to that monarch. The Queen was a woman of strong discernment, and great mental accomplishments: as distinguished in *her* situation, as Solomon was in *his*. She set out, it seems, from her own country with a great retinue, and with many precious gifts, to lay at that monarch's feet: moreover she prepared herself with certain *curious* and *intricate questions*, in order to put the sagacity of Solomon to the test. "And Solomon told her all her questions; and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not." The Queen was equally amazed at the comprehensiveness of his understanding, and at the magnificence

of his residence. She viewed with astonishment, according to the language of the verses preceding my text, his table, with the attendants thereupon: his servants, his cupbearers, and his ministers—and to conclude the whole, when she saw the ascent by which he went up into the HOUSE OF THE LORD, there was no more spirit in her: that is to say, she was absolutely lost in admiration and astonishment. And she said to the king, “it was a *true* report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it—and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me—for thou *exceedest* the fame which I heard.”

Having thus explained the circumstances which led to the observation of which the text is composed, I shall solicit your earnest attention to the important doctrine which may be engrafted thereon: and shall more particularly discuss it under the two following heads; First, Fame, or a desire to be distinguished, is natural to man. Secondly, if it be natural, it is our duty to direct it to *legitimate* objects, and to leave behind a fame distinguished for wisdom and for virtue, rather than for quali-

fications of a more dazzling and less durable nature.

First, it has been observed, that fame is natural to man. By endowing us with reason—with a consciousness of right and wrong—and with a will to act—God Almighty seems to have designed us, the fairest work of his creation, for deeds of greatness and of goodness, which necessarily make a general and powerful impression on mankind; cause our deeds to be talked of, and recorded, in so public a manner, that, in contradistinction to the man who has never been heard of beyond the precincts of his fields, or his village, we involuntarily say, “such a character is FAMOUS” — is publicly known and applauded. He is mentioned with our lips, and he is recorded in those works which we are in the habits of perusing. This passion for distinction has been said to belong naturally to man. And why? Because it is a feeling which enables him sometimes to be of the most beneficial service to the human race. As every good and perfect gift comes from God, so every pure and intellectual felicity proceeds from the same heavenly source of munificence. Hence, with sensibilities acute, and perhaps in situations humble and straitened, we see

many a human being break from the fetters of obscurity, and burst upon the world with a sudden and an overwhelming radiance. "What" — says the intellectual character, who has learnt to imbibe wisdom at the fountain-head of religion, and who, like Solomon, neglects not the worship of his Maker—"what can confine the efforts of the mind? Neither power nor persecution can subdue, neither adversity nor mischance extinguish, our mental energies. The brute lives his little day, under torture, under the whip and scourge, and the persecution of him whom he has struggled to the last to please. He dies, and is forgotten. But MAN is made in a more perfect mould: the SOUL, the ever living spirit which was breathed into him at his creation, will not suffer him to walk, thus mechanically and thus goaded, from his cradle to his grave. Those for whom salvation has been effected by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ, are surely born for a fate worthy of the Power by which they have been made. Nor is this principle of fame, this desire to be distinguished among our fellow creatures, confined to the narrow limits of this world—to the poor gratifications which the applause of human beings alone bestows.

No : it transports us to another state of existence, and bids us finally to hope for the approving sentence of angels, and more particularly of Him who is coming one day to judge the quick and the dead—at the sound of whose voice, the graves are to surrender their entombed bodies—and men are, without the least disguise or equivocation, to give an account of their actions.

My brethren, when it has been said that fame is natural to man, and that we are all emulous, as Solomon appears to have been, to be distinguished for the splendor, or worth, or peculiarity of our actions, let it be understood that those characters are alluded to who make use of the *reason* which God has given them. And do not *all* men make use of this reason? Assuredly not :—a great portion of mankind, without being guilty of positive mischief, is criminal through a supineness which seems to stupify and benumb all their better faculties. These men have been probably well educated; and what are called “wordly accomplishments” have been unsparingly lavished upon them: but, when the season for reflection and action commences, they stand unaccountably still, as if entranced. They suffer the stream of life to glide by them;

without producing the least fructification. They are not cheered and refreshed by its salubrity—but count hour after hour, day upon day, and year upon year, as empty sounds, without being filled up by one useful, manly, or praise-worthy action. Most unhappy surely is HE, to whose eyes the calendar of life presents such a cheerless blank! Time, the most precious gift of God to man, has been wholly abused and mis-spent—and the night of death advances without one consolatory reflection to enliven its gloom. Shun therefore this lethargic, this criminal, repose: be alive to better feelings, and better hopes: consider that there is neither cunning nor device in the grave; and that when death comes, no man can work. Think, how much the most *active* have *yet* to do! and be not lulled into a fatal security, that *mere abstinence from evil* will obtain you a seat in those mansions, “whose builder and maker is God.” Act quickly, constantly, and uprightly—and your fame shall *follow*: for that reputation only is pure, which is the shadow of yourselves, and which will inevitably be the result of a sincerity and singleness of principle and of conduct.

Thus much for the first division of the

subject ; shewing that a desire of being known, a love of fame, is, in general, a natural passion with man : and that this passion is implanted in us by Almighty God, as a quality which may be made productive of the most substantial benefits to the whole human race.

I come now, in the second place, to consider the different degrees, or rather species of fame, and that, if we have enjoyed this privilege of making ourselves generally known, how imperiously it becomes our duty to direct it to the most *laudable* objects : to cultivate a desire of being distinguished only as it is connected with a RATIONAL and a VIRTUOUS FAME. Alas ! how little of this does the volume of human life exhibit to our view. On the contrary, how innumerable are the instances wherein men have perverted the noblest feeling implanted in them for the basest and most criminal gratifications. To pass by the frightful picture which *ambition*—ambition of war and bloodshed, and conquest, exhibits—to touch barely on the subjects which suggest themselves to our imagination on the sack of cities and slaughter of thousands of human beings—to make bare mention only of these things, let us turn our eyes to *other* instances not less odious, and which more

frequently present themselves within the circle of our experience. Here a human being of either sex sacrifices everything to the love of distinction, from the shallow consideration of exterior beauty—from vanity of *person* and *dress*. Infinite are the labours bestowed on these trifling, irrational objects. The morning is devoted to the study of evening decoration, and the evening's repose is perhaps disturbed by a view of some more fortunate candidate for attraction—forgetting, that even Solomon himself, when arrayed in all his glory, was exceeded in splendour by the common lily of the field. And do you imagine that, on being visited by any person of distinction, or discernment, such a one would receive the splendid eulogy which the Queen of Sheba conferred upon Solomon? “thou *exceedest* the fame that I heard?” Oh, no! No remark of this kind would ever escape from sensible lips towards a being, who, like the gilded insect in the sun-beam, seeks only to flutter for a season, and to exhibit the gaudy colouring of personal decoration. Are they human beings, rational creatures, who act thus? Are they the favoured objects of heaven, for whom salvation has been wrought by the blood of a crucified Saviour? My brethren, draw

yourselves the conclusion: and join with the preacher in despising a fame which is built on so perishable a basis.

Again. Another species of fame, for which too many sacrifice their time, their property, and their comforts, is, that of being distinguished for the enjoyment of *pleasure* and *dissipation*. But how, some may say, are these incompatible with *comfort*? I answer, ask the individual who has harassed his intellects, exhausted his strength, and devoted his property to the enjoyment of pleasure in all its various shapes—ask him, what there is of *COMFORT* which remains? By *comfort*, I would be understood to infer, peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience. All else is vanity and vexation of spirit. And to what does the *fame* thus acquired *amount*? Into how short a compass may it be compressed? Let us suppose that these pleasurable propensities may not have led to absolute *vice* and *criminality*, (a supposition, which I fear will not be always granted,) in what then have they terminated?—and how are we to be spoken of by our contemporaries and successors? Look at those who have gone before us in such a career; and be present, if it be possible, when they take their leave of this world.

As their fame has not exceeded report, like Solomon's, so their internal feelings have no connection with what a christian should, at such a crisis ardently desire to partake of. Inscribe the epitaph upon the tomb; and ask the lover of virtue, integrity, and wisdom, whether he can conscientiously make *that* inscription which alone is worthy of having our memories respected? No. As the body shall be resolved into dust—so shall the name of him to whom it belonged be rendered equally perishable. A third species of fame of which human beings are enamoured, is that of *splendor, expense, and ostentation*; and in the indulgence of this, they too often sacrifice the best principles of human nature and human reason. They build their barns, calculate on their possessions, and anticipate an abundant harvest—when their souls, on the same evening, are to be required of them: or, in the language of a celebrated heathen poet, they build their palaces, unmindful of their sepulchres!

It is true, King Solomon was distinguished for this magnificence: but he was also distinguished for *mental* attainments; and when he received the compliment of the Queen of Sheba, it was for these *latter* acquirements—“behold, one half of the greatness of thy

WISDOM was not told me—for thou exceedest the fame that I heard.” But the evils to which this species of fame is conducive, are not applicable solely to pompous edifices and splendid retinues. It brings on mischiefs of another kind. It is apt to blind the eyes and to steel the heart against the miseries which are abroad in the world, and which poor and unbefriended people experience. On the lap of luxury, the proud and pampered slave to his appetites, thinks not of the cutting blast which enters the poor man’s cot, and brings tears and lamentations in his family. He thinks not that while *his* table is replenished to satiety, and his servants have “bread enough and to spare,” the little ALL of his poor neighbour is expended...and hunger and nakedness are adding to the horrors of the season!

Shun, therefore—if providence should suddenly elevate you to that distinction which arises from *wealth*—shun a conduct so inhuman; and engraft *that* fame upon your property, which acquaints an admiring world that you are the patron of the industrious and ingenious, and the poor man’s best guardian and friend.

A fourth, and the last species of fame which

I shall here notice, is, that resulting from *intellectual acquirements*. To be distinguished as wits, as poets, as orators, as historians, or as writers of whatever denomination, is a very common, and a most ardent principle in the human mind : and would to God that this important object of fame were always connected with feelings of *integrity*, and devoted only to *honest* ends!—to please, to instruct, and to edify. Although the assumed superiority of one sex arrogate to itself a dictating to the other, yet to how *few* men would the sensible answer of the Queen of Sheba be directed, “thou *exceedest* the fame that I heard?” There is a class of human beings, who imagine that the *faculties* of the opposite sex are to be amused only with light, shallow, and contemptible productions—but who would nevertheless feel acutely, and deeply blush, on an answer the *reverse* of what was offered to Solomon ! Now, next to the prostitution of our talents to such vain and irrational objects, is that shameful abandonment of them to corrupt, to lead astray, and undo. Dreadful is that triumph which is enjoyed on *such* a successful exertion of ability. The heart, which is attached to such a head, can beat to no virtuous call ; and has no impulse

but what is connected with the indulgence of a perverted and vicious feeling.

Look upon human life—and while you confess that instances of such successful criminality are too frequent, strive, not only to counteract them by seasonable admonition, but to suppress every working in your *own* fancies to a *similar* tendency. The heart of man is deceitful above all things. If God have given you intellect, it is given to be exercised in the cause of virtue and religion. It is given to make yourselves and others better, as well as wiser and happier creatures. The ebullitions of the fancy may command the applause of the many; but the esteem, the lasting commendation of the discerning few, is what a truly wise man will be alone desirous of obtaining. It is this which has rescued merit from oblivion; and has now consecrated the memories of those, on whom the fickle vulgar were wont not to bestow one single mark of attention and respect.

I conclude, therefore, with earnestly exhorting you, if you are desirous (as I trust in God you are) of leaving behind that *fame* or *memory* which is connected with a love of VIRTUE, to cultivate in your dispositions the seeds of humility, of discretion, and integrity:

always calling to mind, that to *do good*, is better than to *think* or to *write well*. The love of fame, which Solomon appears so pre-eminently to have possessed, is a delicate and difficult qualification to manage. Personal vanities are out of the question. These have nothing in them worth a moment's attention. A passion for pleasure is totally unconnected with a legitimate fame. Splendid possessions are to be considered only as the means of obtaining it, as they are instruments in your hands to make yourselves and others wise and good. Intellectual acquirements must be properly *directed*. There is a licentiousness of *understanding* as well as of *conduct*. Remember these things. Regulate your actions according to the impression made by such remembrance ; and may you be enabled, on a retrospective view of what you have said and done, and written—to remark, that there is nothing, which, dying, you would wish to be blotted from recollection.

SERMON XXVII.

LUKE xii. i, latter part.

*Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees,
which is hypocrisy.*

WHOEVER reads the parables, or meditates upon the observations of our Saviour, will have frequent and striking proofs of the force with which he, at all times, exposes the odious vice of HYPOCRISY. His detestation of this vice is expressed indeed upon every occasion on which it would be likely to pierce the consciences of the guilty, or to console the feelings of the innocent ; but, on no subject connected with it, or rather upon none of its numerous ramifications, has he expressed a more decided abhorrence of it, than upon that which relates to an external *affected* PIETY, and scrupulous formality of behaviour in *matters of religion*.

Whoever reads the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, in particular, will be convinced

of the truth of this preliminary observation : for not fewer than eight verses in that chapter commence with denouncing a woe upon the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. They are called whited sepulchres without, with putrefaction within. They are afterwards stigmatised as “Serpents”—and “a generation of vipers”—and are then asked “how they can escape the damnation of hell?”

These severe animadversions of our Saviour upon the sin of hypocrisy, will surely justify every moral teacher, and every spiritual pastor, in holding it up to the thorough contempt and abhorrence of the flock which he addresses :—for, if there be one vice more odious, more mischievous, and, would to God one could say, more *rare*, than another, it is that to which I now solicit your earnest attention, and free and impartial judgment.

Why does our Saviour dwell so much upon the hypocritical assumption of *sanctity* and piety of manners? It is, because he well knew human nature; and that, in proportion to the credit which men derived from their *religious character*, would be the portion of confidence they might acquire in temporal concerns.

There is something so shocking and revolting in a man who sets *all* religion at defiance—that you can hardly venture to think, or to speak, favourably of him; much less to trust him. Now, this the hypocrite knows very well; and, accordingly, he makes his approaches by endeavouring to acquire the character of a humble, and a pious man: of one, who constantly attends Sabbatical worship; and who, in the ejaculations which he utters, and in the general demeanor which he exhibits, presents himself to your eye as an amiable and a praise-worthy character. In short, this is little more, in the language of our Saviour, than the Pharisee kneeling down at the corners of streets, with his garments studiously adjusted, and uttering long prayers to be “seen and heard of *men*.” Verily, he shall receive his reward.

You may here, however, be induced to remark, that some danger may probably ensue to society, if these forms of religion, are, however indirectly, held up to ridicule or to censure: and that, if *external* evidence of piety be a criterion of *hypocrisy*, the best of men may, from such evidence, be numbered among HYPOCRITES. Nay, the observation may be carried yet farther. While the hypo-

crite continues masked by the observance of his religious duties—while he appears fervent in prayer, and zealous in the discharge of all moral and religious concerns,—in short, while the world is mistaken in him, and deceived by his semblances of religion—it is, to all intents and purposes, as *effectual* with regard to *society*, as if he had the *very life and spirit* of religion. But let us pause again and again, before we sacrifice our benevolence and humanity for the sake of an ingenious argument, which, to say the best of it, is little more than a sophism. Have we no regard for the *man himself*? The question is, what benefit *he* receives from the character? For, though he happens to be the instrument of bringing many to righteousness, and though there is a blessing promised to those that do so—yet, he is no way *entitled* to that blessing, because the good influence of his example was *no part of his intention*. In order to make the character beneficial to him, it must have something in it **INTRINSICALLY** valuable: something which, without the consideration of a reward, or the flattering testimony of man, may give him *absolute pleasure* in the possession.

Now, the only real guarantee of pleasure

that a man can receive from a good name, are, either the consciousness of that virtue by which it was procured, or, the consideration that it is conducive to God's glory and the good of mankind. We may affix what meaning, or allot what merit, we please to human actions, but they are to be canvassed and to be decided upon entirely in regard to the *intention*. A man, who knows he is not in a state of salvation himself, may receive but little comfort from reflecting that he causes *others* to be so; or, that he is undesignedly promoting the honour of that God, whose ordinances he abuses, and whose name he prostitutes to the worst of purposes. So that unless he can play the hypocrite with *himself*, and flatter himself into a conceit of that virtue which he has *not*—all the applause, all the respect, all the homage which can be paid to him, on the score of his pretended piety, so far from affording him *pleasure*, is absolutely a *pain* to him! For if his sensibilities be not quite blunted, and his judgment intoxicated, the first and most obvious reflection he can make upon it, is, that he does not deserve *one tittle* of all this admiration which is bestowed on him. Now, every degree of undeserved praise is, in effect, a *reproach*;

inasmuch as it awakens in our minds a sense of our own unworthiness, and looks a good deal like upbraiding us with the want of that merit which is ascribed to us. Accordingly, when we suppose the man who offers it to be acquainted with our infirmities, we are so far from being pleased with the flattery, that we are apt to resent it as an indignity. If it be asked therefore, in the case before us, *who* can give so much uneasiness to the hypocrite, since we suppose his vices to be absolutely concealed from the world, and his pretences to pass for realities, I answer—**HIS OWN CONSCIENCE.** This is the ever watchful centinel which heaven hath fixed in our bosoms; which no wealth can bribe, no stratagem elude, and no force subdue.

This directly starts up to check the most presumptuous sinner; to curb his pride; to abase his vanity; and to reduce him to an humble sense of his own baseness and deformity. This tells him of the widow's portion whom, in the midst of all his sanctity, he has devoured; or, of the orphan's innocence, which, with all his pretensions to piety, he has undermined. In a word, it is **THIS** which will always be a bitter ingredient in

every cup of which he partakes, and turn his triumphs into shame.

I am thus anxious, my brethren, that hypocrisy, as connected with the affectation of superior *sanctity*, should be thoroughly bared to your view, and that you may be convinced of its frightfulness—not only because our blessed Saviour on all occasions held it up to abhorrence, but, because it is, of *all* the species of vice, the most dangerous and provoking of divine punishment. Most assuredly, it is far from my intention to suppose cases, or to make use of arguments, which might tend to create a painful suspicion in your minds, on every Sabbath on which you worshipped your Maker—from the supposition that you may be considered hypocrites by your fellow creatures, if you *duly* attended to the *serious functions* of *prayer*. Nothing of this kind ever can affect my mind. In fact, nothing of this kind can affect *you* so much as it may do the *preacher*, from whom the admonition is given: for surely, of all species of hypocrisy under heaven, *that* is the most contemptible and odious, which is connected with the discharge of *professional duties*—and indeed, much greater is the sin

we incur, and much heavier will be the punishment inflicted upon *us*, if, in the tenor of our *lives*, as well as of our *discourses*, we do not keep the praise and glory of God constantly in view :—that is, if we do not act as we exhort *others* to act—uprightly, conscientiously, humanely, and religiously.

Having thus endeavoured to illustrate the important subject of which we are treating, as it is connected with the affairs of *religion*, I purpose, in the second place, making some observations upon it, as it affects us in minor concerns—or, as it is exhibited, and is to be condemned, in the more common occurrences of human life,

One of the most dreadful attendants upon hypocrisy, is *falsehood*. Indeed, it is so necessarily allied to it, that it requires no ordinary ingenuity to separate, in the discussion of it, the one from the other. What, even in the most trifling display of this odious vice, is the chief motive of action? The hope of *success*; the hope of obtaining, under *false* colours, what you dared not have solicited under the display of *truth*. Job says, most forcibly indeed, “ What is the Hypocrite’s hope, though he hath gained the whole world, when God taketh away his

soul?" Place, I beseech you, this awful admonition against *any* hope however ardent, and *any* success however complete. And how truly shocking and desperate appears to be the hypocrite's case?! Why, it may be asked, is the judgment so severe against this sin? Because, in general, the hypocrite is, of all men, the most culpable and callous: culpable, inasmuch as the best feelings of human nature are assumed to gain an artful point, and to throw a generous bosom off its guard:—and callous *surely* is the hypocrite, above all his species, because, even the destruction of the person whom he has deceived, wrings not one drop of pity from his flinty bosom! It is like a miscreant who blinds our eyes to conduct us to the edge of a precipice, and when we fall headlong in, so far from commiserating us, proceeds anew to lead others to the same dreadful catastrophe. "God, therefore, says Job, shall take away the hypocrite's hope, though he gain the object which he sought after."

And even without this certain punishment from heaven, what is there in the *completest success* of an hypocrite which can induce one honest heart to desire it?

The fear of detection embitters every



enjoyment: the doubts, the anxieties, the apprehension, the conviction, that he has obtained that to which he had no claim—and that under the form of the dove, he has been infusing the venom of the serpent—must produce such a state of mind, as it is impossible for the purely virtuous character to conceive. Add to this, the *moment* detection takes place, the hypocrite's character is irretrievably lost. ONCE a hypocrite, ALWAYS A BAD MAN. So speaks the instinctive language of nature. It is not thus with actions, however injurious and rash, if they spring only from a *momentary* impulse. We make allowances for human nature in a state of irritability: and a man may precipitately be guilty of even a most injurious action—but when we come to reflect that the deliberate dictates of his judgment, and the feelings of his heart, did not go with it, we are disposed to forgive and forget; and to place the transaction in the most charitable point of view. A hypocrite has no chance of being thus dealt with; and if he escape from one community, he goes into another—with the trepidations of a human being who *knows* that he is a banished man, and that his sentence of banishment is *just*. In short, he has the mark, like the first mur-

derer, in his forehead ; and though he may fly from *others*, he cannot escape HIMSELF.

I shall now, in conclusion, make a few practical remarks upon the necessity of extirpating this vice—wherever we find it—in ourselves, or in others.

The earlier in life we practise sincerity, the better will it be for our present and future welfare. A love of truth, in young people, is among the surest means of making them strangers to hypocrisy. None so happy, none so honourable, none so heartily caressed, as those who are frank, and open, and ingenuous. They can pour out their hearts to God, as well as to man, with a hope, and, indeed, a conviction, that they have merited this happiness by the line of conduct which they have pursued. But let no young person, here present, ever console himself with an idea that he is satisfied with the applause of *man*, when he knows that he dares not meet the interrogatories of *God* and his *conscience*.

An early habit of considering actions in an undisguised manner, and with a view to the *good* which they will produce, is also a safeguard against hypocrisy. Our conclusions should not be problematical, but direct and certain : and surely, even without a reference

to the approbation of the Deity, what happiness can be compared with the happiness of that mortal, who can lay his hand upon his heart and say, "I have done unto others, what I would they should do unto me?" He, who feels the force of this precious truth, is rich beyond the possession of the wealth of worlds: is noble, beyond the distinction of the brightest diadem: is successful, beyond the hope of the most sanguine imagination. Upon him, God Almighty hath poured down a blessing which it is not in the power of artful stratagem, or tyrannical compulsion, to diminish or destroy.

But if, in early days, the leaven of the Pharisees, or the SIN of HYPOCRISY be odious, oh! how much more forcibly should we shun it in our *riper years*; when we become parents and have families, which look up to us to be true, and just, and open, and honest in all our dealings? My brethren — lay these considerations to your heart. We may even suppose that all will be quiet and comfortable after the effects of the *first* detection of hypocrisy have subsided—but what human being is there—what Christian, who presumes to hope for salvation through the merits of his Saviour—that can possibly suppose the

being entangled in the nets of hypocrisy, is the sure way to everlasting happiness beyond the grave?

Miserable, beyond all others of his race, is HE, who every morning and evening, placing his hand upon his bosom, finds, within, a conscience that never ceases to upbraid him of stratagem and fraud. You may talk of consolation, of pity, and of hope of pardon—but what particle of earth is left for *him* to fix the anchor of hope upon, whose life is as a vessel tossed about in a stormy ocean, without helm, or chart, or compass!

It is not wealth:—it is not splendid connections:—it is not costly apparel, or sumptuous fare:—that ennobles man. It is SINCERITY:—it is a LOVE OF TRUTH:—it is the possession of a heart, which knows not how to *attempt* to reconcile itself to falsehood, but which has always beaten at the call of friendship and charity, and has known no other impulse than that which God imparted to it at the moment of its creation. If we want an example of this extraordinary excellence, let us look at Christ. No guile, no shadow of turning, no duplicity, no hypocrisy, formed one ingredient of his character. “In him, behold a true Israelite. Behold the Lamb

of God which taketh away the sins of the world.”

After this great example may we all live ; and with the hopes, which his unsophisticated religion inspires, may we meet death :—as honest men, as sincere Christians, and as repentant sinners.

SERMON XXVIII.

ROM. xiii. 12.

*The night is far spent, the day is at hand :
let us therefore cast off the works of dark-
ness, and let us put on the armour of
light.**

WHOEVER has been accustomed to peruse seriously the compositions of the great Apostle, from whose Epistles the words of my text are selected, cannot fail to have discovered in them a wonderful capacity of mind, adapted to all circumstances of life, and more especially calculated to promote the best interests of mankind. If any one may be said to have been (as he really was) preternaturally called, or appointed, for the great work of human salvation, it was the author of those thirteen Epistles which immediately succeed the Acts of the Apostles ; and which are now published to the world,

* Preached at St. Mary's, November 28, 1824.

not in the order in which they were written, but according to the importance of the communities to which they were addressed. Among these, those to the Romans and Corinthians are to be particularly noticed for the importance and variety of the topics introduced in them—for the acuteness of reasoning and earnestness of persuasion—and for the magnificence of imagery and of diction by which they are distinguished and adorned. But the Apostle had good cause for the exercise of such intellectual energies. He was selected to be the reformer of the most powerful, but most corrupt and immoral communities at that time existing. Vices the most odious, and crimes the most appalling, had marked the Romans and Corinthians, when St. Paul—who, previously, had been “breathing out threatenings and slaughters” against the church of Christ—was chosen by the Almighty to become a testimony and a tower of strength in support of a crucified Redeemer. Accordingly, you find every where—throughout the same great Apostle’s writings, the deepest sense of contrition and humility, mingled with exhortations the most convincing and commanding. The author seems to be constantly separating himself from the

cause which he advocates. Of his own efforts, he always speaks with a temperate but conscious triumph : of his own merits, or demerits, with the deepest sense of unworthiness :—he says, that he is the least of all the Apostles—that he is not meet to be called an Apostle : and why ? because he persecuted the church of Christ.

Yet, deep and unfeigned as was the sense of his own unworthiness, it pleased God to enable this consummate teacher to assume a uniform tone, or tenor, of the most simple, but convincing, argument throughout all his Epistolary compositions. That presence of mind—that consciousness of truth—that command of reasoning and of persuasion, which made Felix tremble upon his judgment seat, and almost persuaded King Agrippa to become a Christian—are discernible in the close argument, lucid explanation, and, at times, irresistible pathos or invective, of the compositions of St. Paul.

These preliminary remarks lead us to a close examination of the Epistle from which the text is taken, and more especially of the words of the text themselves—which have been repeated to you in the service of the day. It is from the last but three of the chapters from

the Epistle to the Romans ; and you observe, my brethren, how, as the Apostle comes to the close of his Epistle, his earnestness and anxiety seem to increase : an anxiety, not exclusively applicable to the *ordinary* purposes of human life, but connected with, and directed to, the great and eternal interests of life and death—time and eternity. In the preceding verse, he tells the Romans that now it is high time to awake out of sleep—not of that sleep which is the result of bodily labour, and which refreshes us for the customary occupations of the coming day—but of that sleep, which is the sleep of *death*, or of the extinction of all moral, virtuous, and proper feeling connected with their hopes as heirs of immortality. *This* is the sleep out of which the Apostle is so anxious that the Romans should be shook. It is for their delivery from *such* an entrancement, or slumber, that St. Paul applies all the energies of his mind, and pours forth all the warmth of his feeling—adding, as a most especial reason *why* they should be so roused, that “ their salvation is nearer than when they believed ”—that is, nearer than it was when they first received the faith of Christ.

And then, in the words of the text, assign-

ing an additional reason: "the night is far spent: the day is at hand"—meaning, the then dark state of persecution of the pure Christians by the unbelieving Jews and Gnosticks, was well nigh over: and the more joyful state of quiet and calm was then, like the dawn of day, approaching. "Let us therefore," adds the Apostle, "cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." In other words, if such be the promising *prospect* before you, be worthy of its *realization*: let it oblige you to perform the deeds of the day: all actions of Christian purity, which shun not the observance of men: which claim and even challenge inspection: casting off those works which are done only under the cover of darkness;—such as, in the following verse, are designated as "rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying:" but, on the contrary, telling the Roman converts to put on the whole armour of light: that is to say, to be strengthened and secured in the panoply of faith and good works. This is the sound and enlightened advice, which the great Apostle of the Gentiles gives to the voluptuous and perhaps wavering Roman community—to whom this important Epistle

is addressed: an advice most essential at that season in particular, when the complete establishment of the Gospel dispensation was daily and hourly expected, and when the errors of Paganism were to be extirpated by the irresistible truths of Christianity.

But powerful as might have been the motives of St. Paul for this address, it cannot fail to strike you, that every Christian minister, at this particular season of the year, has *also* very especial reasons for addressing his Christian brethren in a manner approximating to that of the great Apostle of the Gentiles—when, by the grace of God, having been permitted to live almost through another year, we are again about to be assembled to commemorate the anniversary of the advent of his Son.

How seriously, therefore, are we called upon, in the language of the Apostle, “to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light.” How powerfully are we called upon to assume that Christian meekness—to exhibit that Christian purity—which, having been baptised in the faith of Christ, God Almighty expects us to shew forth at a moment like the present. Be it our duty, to remember, that, although in the estima-

tion of *some*, the coming season *may* be one “ of rioting and uproar, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying,” yet it never arrives without a sort of collateral reflection that another year has just passed over our heads, and that every passing year brings us nearer to *Him*—whose years shall never fail—who is always the same—and from whom, at the SECOND ADVENT of his Son, we are to receive our final, our eternal, and irreversible doom.

I shall therefore devote the remainder of this Discourse to a practical illustration of the words of the Apostle, as they affect every one of us in our pilgrimage through this life, and in our hopes of that life — that Advent, or coming of Christ—when God shall be all in all: when the grave shall give up its dead: when the trumpet shall sound, and we shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, and from mortality to immortality, in the twinkling of an eye.

First: The night is far spent. The period of life is, with many of us, more *protracted* than others. To such therefore, the night is far spent, and the grave stands, comparatively, near, and at hand, Let the aged search their own hearts. Let them look back on the lives

they have led—and more especially let them contemplate that life which more quickly awaits them, and which is never to have an end. Do they thank God for having been permitted not only thus long to live, but for having devoted such lengthened life to acts of mercy, kindness, and christian virtue? Do they consider that in the grave there is neither cunning nor device, and that a longer night is yet to follow, “when no man can work?” But say, my brethren, is the night far spent *only* to the OLD? Did I seem to consider it as exclusively confined to the AGED? Look around you, within most walls of christian worship, and your reflections will furnish you with the remembrance of those—who were not taken away full of years and in a good old age, but who were snatched in their blossom and in their prime. What speaking proofs are these of human mortality and human frailty! And to how many, *young* as well as *old*, is the night far spent? Doubtless, reasoning from the weight of experience on one side rather than *another*, to the *old* the night is farther spent than to the *young*; but let no creature, here assembled, calculate with *certainty* upon such a dispensation of things. The sorrow of the parent may strike

us as powerfully, yea more powerfully, than that of the offspring—because, in such instances, the visitations of providence seem to be severer, and the ordinary course of things to be in some measure inverted. But, judging from experience, mournful experience, and upon the broad basis of christianity—the night is ALWAYS far spent: to the young and to the old: and every year that passes away, and all the experience which every passing year enables us to collect, only proves—only speaks to our hearts—“what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue.”

Secondly. The day is at hand. The day succeeds the night, and the night the day, reasoning on the ordinary course of nature: but there *is* a day which is to arrive, which is NEVER to be succeeded by night: whose radiance is never to be dimmed; whose serenity is never to be ruffled; and whose duration is never to be bounded. This is, as it were, the spiritual day of IMMORTALITY; for the enjoyment of which we were created, and of the ineffable delights of which no tongue can speak, and no imagination conceive: neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, “what God, in that everlasting day, hath laid up for

them that love him, and have taken delight to walk in his commandments and statutes, wherein he commanded them to walk." For *such* a day, therefore, who would not be desirous of closing his eyes in the slumber of the grave, with a holy hope, and a well grounded faith? Who, when he sees the young drooping and withering on one side—as well as the old on the other—when he witnesses the casualties, and turmoils, and vexations, and woes, of human existence—would not be anxious to recline his head in that resting place, from which he is to be roused by the trumpet of the Arch-angel, to an eternity of unimaginable bliss!?

Thirdly and lastly. "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." That is to say, in order to go through the night of death with composure and tranquillity, let us throw aside the follies, enormities, and sins which so easily beset us; and let us shew forth the purity of gospel precepts, by a life led conformably to their spirit and their truth. The best sense of gratitude which we can shew to our heavenly father, for having permitted us to live through another year, to hail the anniversary of the Advent of Christ—is, to carry with us, in

our chambers within, and in our sojournings abroad, a deep and humiliating sense of our own unworthiness, and of the infinite wonders and mercies of the redemption of the world, through his son, the same Jesus Christ our Lord : who, as at this season, “came to visit us in great humility :” that he has given us the power to act, as well as the sense to feel—and that one year, following another, passed in weak resolves, and unproductive efforts, is *not* the casting away of the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light. Figurative as may be this expression, its meaning and application are sufficiently obvious and binding upon us christians. Every man, however humble, has his task assigned to him; and the faithful and honest execution of that task, is as surely registered in heaven, as of any task, or situation, however splendid and important. Born and baptised in the belief and faith of Christ Jesus, the code of laws—or, if I may so speak, the weapons of defence, wrought and consigned to us by that same Saviour—will enable us to ward off the fiery darts of the devil, and to be cased in the armour of light. Our moral duties—our spiritual hopes and happiness—our probable destiny in the world which is to come—are all

clearly developed, and strongly inculcated in the book of life and immortality. The sceptical shall not avail himself of his jeer, nor the profane of his scoffing : there shall be no balm for the reprobate, nor peace for the wicked.

With these feelings, let us all meditate upon God's word, in our Bibles, and in our Liturgy. Let us seek comfort for a wounded spirit in the consolations of the Gospel : let us press the cross of Christ to our hearts, as, from our infancy, we have been taught, by our Pastors and Masters, and those who are put in authority over us, to reverence and respect it. Let us draw near to the sacramental table with faith — and feed upon Christ in our hearts, with thanksgiving. So that—when the night of mortality is followed by the interminable day of eternity—in the *last* day—when the same Saviour shall come again “ in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal—through him, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, now and ever.”

SERMON XXIX.

I TIM. vi. 9.

*But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts; which drown men in destruction and perdition.**

IN order to understand the full import of these words, let us read the context in the two immediately following verses. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness."

Such is the impressive language of the great Apostle of the Gentiles to his beloved disciple TIMOTHY: language, of which the tenor is, more or less, enforced in the

* Preached at St. Mary's, on the Sunday (Dec. 5, 1824) following a late awful catastrophe.

Gospels, and throughout the Epistles of the several Apostles. But from the lips of no one does similar advice flow more frequently and more powerfully than from those of our blessed Saviour:—who constantly places before his auditors, either by express injunction, or by parabolical illustration, not only the real character of wealth, but the temptations to which an inordinate love of it leads, and the results, palpable and ruinous, that ensue from an improvident or a nefarious expenditure. That great authority was himself but too deeply versed and experienced in the truth of the doctrine which he delivered. He had been *tried* by the like temptation. Indeed, as your recollections will immediately supply you with the fact, it was from an insolent, but ill-grounded presumption, on the force of this world's treasures and glories, that Satan reserved *this*—the last, and, as he thought, the most likely to be *successful*, of *all* his temptations—to overcome the Saviour of the world. The circumstance is thus recorded in the fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, all these

things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Then saith Jesus unto him, "Get thee behind me, Satan—for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him only* shalt thou serve."

Thus, you observe, the possession of millions of this world's treasure—involvement in the possession of the kingdoms, and the glories of them, set before the eyes of our Saviour by the tempter—is instantly, and unhesitatingly, discarded and rejected;—and the author of the proposal treated with the scorn and indignation which he merited. What an inconceivable grasp of mind—what a wonderfully intuitive and unerring knowledge of every thing developed by the possession of such incalculable wealth—was displayed, and put in practice, upon an occasion so trying and so unprecedented! It was natural therefore, my brethren, that that pure and lofty spirit, which possessed our Lord and Master, in regard to a just appreciation of wealth, should also, in some degree, possess **THOSE** who were *sent* to preach the doctrine which such an authority inculcated; and accordingly you see, every where, throughout *all* the apostolical writings, that correct estimate, and luminous exposition, of the doctrine in

question, which could not have failed to find its way home to the bosoms to which it was applied—which must have searched the most obdurate, and warmed the most callous heart.

Reverting therefore to the particular words of the text, let us hear an exposition, or illustration, of them, by a few of our more eminent divines: “They, (says one of the most learned*) on whom the love of money so prevails, that they are resolved they will be rich, if by any means they can compass wealth, are in the ready way to yield to any lust, which will gratify their greedy humours. Even the heathens, agreeably to the Apostle here, thought *covetousness* to comprehend *all vices*. It also causeth men to make shipwreck of faith, and a good conscience, and whatsoever else is sacred.” A more ancient commentator† thus remarks upon the same verse—“Whereas, on the other side, they that set their minds on the getting of riches, are thereby betrayed into many temptations and snares to sin; into many desires and pursuits which are both ridiculous and unprofitable of themselves; bring nothing of satisfaction, but on the contrary great mischiefs,

* Whitby. † Hammond

with them: in opposition to the proposed advantages — and which finally bring ruin even in this world, and eternal damnation in another.”

A recent commentator, and one of the most admirable learning and sagacity,* thus remarks:—“ Though in this verse, (namely, the verse of which my text is composed) the Apostle may have had the corrupt *teachers* in view, I think it is a description of the pernicious effects of an *immoderate* pursuit of riches on *all* ranks of men: foolish lusts, are those which are below the dignity of human nature: hurtful lusts, are those which produce *immediate evil* to the person who indulges them. The latter part of the verse, “ which drown men in destruction and perdition,” is an admirable picture (continues the same Commentator) in which the Apostle represents men, who are actuated by the desire of riches, and with the lusts excited by the possession of them, as pursuing, to the utmost verge of a precipice, those shadowy phantoms, which owe all their *semblance* of reality, to the magic of the passions, which riches, and a desire of them, have excited in their minds — and as falling into a gulph,

* Macknight.

where they plunge so deep, that they are irrecoverably lost."

Having thus submitted to your consideration, first, the general point of view in which the subject, treated of, has been considered by the Scriptures—and, secondly, the particular point of view, or distinct and unequivocal avowal of the same doctrine in the words of my text, according to some of the best interpreters of that text—I proceed, in the next place to remark, whether the same doctrine be not only at *all* times equally salutary and applicable, but whether the *present* be not the moment—without an express mention of *recent* circumstances—for its general and urgent inculcation.

My brethren, it is the province, and it is the duty, of all Pastors and spiritual Masters, to apply every thing, by which the public is strongly and intensely excited, to its LEGITIMATE and HONEST ends: for the truth is, that there *are* incidents, sometimes so peculiar, and at other times so tremendous and awful, which, although they do not directly and immediately, as it were, affect our *personal* interests, are yet of a complexion sufficiently extraordinary to occupy both our sleeping and waking hours—to ac-

company us wheresoever we go—and to glide with us even into the temple of God. Hence, in the mixed, and sometimes contradictory emotions, which agitate us, we are apt to arraign the decrees of Providence—to imagine that vice has no efficient counteraction in virtue—that cunning is not detected by integrity—and that fraud is not punished by honesty, clothed in the garb, and armed with the instruments, of justice.

A second reflection, however, checks the precipitancy of the first. We perceive that we cannot penetrate the mysteries of God: that actions, apparently strange and fatal, produce results, not only wholly unanticipated, but which are the MOST LIKELY to prevent the *repetition* of delinquency: and that, if man be surrounded with temptations, if the world be a state of trial, if we walk upon concealed burning ashes, if every thing around us be frail, perilous, deceptive, and “hard to find out”—yet, in the end, if we only substitute patience for impetuosity, humility for presumption, devotion for indifference, prayer for imprecation—in the end, I say, we shall witness the glorious issue of God’s dispensations, and of those *tests* of His good providence, which appear, strong and

bright as the sun at noon-day, in the ultimate triumph of goodness, of virtue, and of justice.

If the careless and superficial observer of his own species ask, *why* man is thus surrounded by temptations, and agitated by passions? I answer, first, that it is precisely because God has created him a free agent—and not an inert, passive, and mechanical creature:—that he has endowed him with understanding, will, and conscience, to enable him to fight against such contending obstacles—and, secondly, that he has furnished him with the *best* weapons of defence, or attack, in his own **INSPIRED WORD**—in the Old and New Testaments—which not only point out to him his nature, his objects, his hopes and his fears, but (which is most essential to our present purpose) which tell him that “no temptation taketh him but such as is *common to man*; that God is faithful, who will not suffer him to be tempted above that he is able; but will, with the *temptation*, also make a way to *escape* that he may be able to bear it.”

Thus, you see, not only that this life is, of necessity, for the promotion of our happiness hereafter, a state of trial and probation—but that, in all trials, we may be sustained, and

carried through triumphant, if we only have recourse to the *proper means* to endure them:—and the history of mankind will, I am sure, furnish you with few or no incidents, in which the powers of temptation so strongly assail us, as in that connected with the words of my text. “ They that will be RICH, fall into *temptation* and a *snare*, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

In a verse or two preceding, the author of these words beautifully contrasts the sentiment contained in them, by a designation of riches of a *different* description “ Godliness with contentment is great gain—and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” From the whole, collectively, I entreat your earnest attention to the remarks which ensue.

In this, and in all civilised and well regulated countries, there is a strait-forward, an honourable, and a commendable road to wealth—(I speak on the presumption of an honest *application* of that wealth—) and there is also a dark, a crooked, a hateful, and a destructive road to the same object. We have it all in our power *which* road to choose—and, blessed be God, in this highly-

favoured country, the simplest, the lowest, the most unassuming, may follow the strait and honourable road, as well as the most exalted and the best connected of human beings. One and the same end awaits both—either for well doing, or for evil doing. If the former, they receive the satisfaction of their own consciences—the richest of all earthly rewards, under the approval of the Deity: and uniting with it, as it never can fail to do, the respect and esteem of the substantial and distinguished part of the community. If they pursue the *latter* road, seeking after many “foolish and hurtful lusts,” they bring down upon themselves “destruction and perdition.” Even handed justice is no respecter of persons. Were it so, there would be an end of all incentive to industry, and of all hope of remuneration. Were it so, the passions, prejudices, and self-interests, of mankind, would be let loose like the conflicting waves of an agitated ocean, to make shipwreck of all that was honourable, and wise, and good. In every scene, however tumultuous, the vessel of state—the bark, in which our best properties (THE LAWS OF THE LAND) are deposited—must go steadily and surely to its destined port. There must be no deviation

to the right or to the left : justice must be the polar star by which she is guided, and the happiness of a large and grateful community, the object which she is bound, and which she will be prompt, to promote.

Such are the reflections arising from a consideration of this subject in a *general* point of view : and I am sure that I am carrying with me the approving testimonies of those, who have thought much, and experienced much, on such a subject. It cannot be too often impressed upon our minds, that *general* as the remarks of the Apostle may be considered, they are founded on *particular* and strict truths : and the oftener the spirit of them is applied to the situation of our fellow creatures, in all the bearings and relations of society, the more perfectly in consonance will it appear to the best principles of human conduct and of moral government.

I shall devote the concluding portion of this Discourse to a consideration of the *second* answer, before given, to those who ask “ why man is here placed the frequent subject of passion and self-will, and the frequent victim of temptation ?” That second answer was, that our safeguard against such ills, is placed in our RELIGION.

Most essential it is, my brethren, against a callous feeling on the one hand, and an enthusiastic and fanatical one on the other, that this serious and sacred subject should be placed on a legitimate, simple, and unsophisticated footing:—at least, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that subject shall be so placed in the observations which follow.

The BIBLE is the inspired word of God. It is the Book of light, of life, and of immortality. It is therefore not only the wisest, but the very best book we can peruse. Here, therefore, comes the question. *How* and *when*, do we peruse it? Let me state the case thus. If a friend, living near us, of character the most irreproachable, and endowed with means the most ample, were to come forward and say, “remember—when you are in difficulty and distress, I am not only near—but am both willing and able to assist you: never despair: have confidence, and so, in the end you, shall have consolation.” What is the result? We forget our friend; or, remembering him, we neglect him. We commence a crooked and dangerous career: and we are afraid to see his countenance, or ashamed to make our necessities known—while we continue to fall “into many foolish

and hurtful lusts." Step after step is made, and each impression left behind is deeper and stronger than the preceding one. This friend, in the mean time, sees, knows, and watches, our proceedings :—which we fondly and foolishly think have escaped all cognizance. At length—the LAST—the FATAL step is taken . . . and "destruction and perdition follow." Then we turn to this friend—then, we raise our voices, and stretch forth our arms, and implore his aid, and cry aloud for mercy and succour !

What would that friend say in reply ? " You come to me, *now*, only because you are *compelled* to come :—that, which would have saved you from perdition, you have been too careless or too hardened to solicit. I have stretched my arm to save, but you heeded it not : I have raised a warning voice, but you turned a deaf ear to my intreaties. Instead therefore of the prompt application, and unsuspecting confidence, of an open-hearted friend, you are only evincing the fears, and betraying the suspicions, of a coward and a desperate man !" Make the application yourselves. ' This friend is the Maker of the Universe : our Father which is in heaven. The aid he proffers is, his inspired word. *When*

do we consult it? Whether rarely, or not at all, can only be inferred from certain *consequences*—from certain *fruits*. But observe—great is the difference between consultation, and *understanding* and *profiting* by what we understand: and thus it is, when men find that all human aids fail, they *then* have recourse to such as comes down immediately from heaven. Doubtless this is better, and much better, than a total abandonment and disregard of such super-human aid—but the question is with what *feelings* do they *come to seek* that aid, and why did they not seek it *before*?—for remember, that heaven will not work *miracles* for any man's salvation.

Thus, then, the pride of human nature, the blindness of our understandings, and the corruption and deceitfulness of our hearts, appear to be the real grounds of that desperate and dangerous conduct, which frequently, in the emphatic words of the text, “drown men in destruction and perdition.”

My wish and prayer is, that all who hear me—that all connected with those now hearing me—may, in *due time*, and with a pious and confident spirit, “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest,” that sacred volume—which, if duly digested, will keep their feet from

falling, and their hands . . . from the commission of crime: remembering, that, although the ways of God are past finding out, yet that those ways lead to peace and pleasantness . . . while, on the other hand, if the punishments of Providence are tardy, they are sure, and they are just.

From those, to whom much has been GIVEN, in *any* way, much is, and ought to be, always REQUIRED. It is but retributive justice . . . while the support and consolation of every man, high or low, rich or poor, instructed or ignorant, must be sought for in sources, where the grossness of human passions does not operate, and where the stimulants of earthly rewards have no *exclusive* influence.

All that we can desire in this world—all that makes rank respected, wealth productive of good, and industry crowned with the imperishable fruits of virtue—ALL are to be sought for, as they are grounded upon, the sacred oracles of God. The BIBLE is as much the poor man's, as the rich man's friend . . . but our *affection* for it must be manifested on occasions, when the sincerity of that affection shall be equally beyond question and suspicion.

Bless God—in your evening and morning devotions—alone, with your families, friends, and even mixed up with the world—bless God, that he has thus enabled you to walk fearlessly, honestly, and uprightly, from the cradle to the grave: that he has made your outgoings and incomings prosperous, and, above all things, that he has thus enabled you to secure “Peace at the Last.”

SERMON XXX.

ROMANS xii. 12.

*Rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ;
continuing instant in prayer.*

THE chapter, from which this verse is taken, is not only eminently distinguished for the close and correct, but for the comprehensive and important view, which it takes of human nature in general, and of the christian character in particular. It is probably among the noblest instances which can be adduced, of the enlarged and liberal mind of the great apostle from whom it hath emanated ; and it is a specimen at once striking and persuasive, of the most courteous, the most logical, and the most efficient manner of convincing the understandings, and comforting the consciences, of those to whom the Epistle is addressed. It is indeed singularly eloquent and encouraging : while the doctrine inculcated cannot fail to strike us as of the most exalted and

unexceptionable nature. Never, except from the lips of our divine Master, Jesus Christ, hath more cogent and more correct principles been conveyed to the very bosoms and consciences of men.

In confirmation of this general and preliminary observation, I might take the entire chapter, verse by verse, and dwell upon each of such verses with no inconsiderable advantage:—reserving, as I must now necessarily do—whatever be the method adopted—the more important part of my address for the illustration of the words of the text. But the limits usually prescribed for discourses in this place, forbid the execution of such a task: and therefore I purpose calling your attention only to a *few* of the earlier verses, and selecting only such of the *subsequent* ones, as may appear to confirm and enforce the particular doctrine held forth in the text, which tells us to “rejoice in hope, to be penitent in tribulation, and to continue instant in prayer.”

Observe, in the first place, with what courtesy and kindness the Apostle commences his exhortation. “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God—that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,

acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." You remark that he beseeches them, not upon his *own authority*—not in a *compulsory* manner—as if, what he said, as coming from himself, should be instantly attended to—but he beseeches them by "the **MERCIES OF GOD.**" He calls upon them to remember the great Jehovah, whose tender mercies are over all his works—and whose power they could not *fail* to remember and to dread. He beseeches them, by the attribute of *mercy*, belonging to such power, to present their bodies a living sacrifice: "holy, acceptable to God,"—because, concludes he, it is your reasonable service: in other words, because it was their bounden duty, and because the fulfilment of that duty, was at once easy, honourable, and productive of the everlasting welfare of their souls.

He goes on—in order that such a salutary object may be effected—by telling the Roman converts, in the second verse, not to be "conformed to this world,"—but to be "transformed by the renewing of their mind—that they may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." In this verse we learn, briefly but forcibly, that, in order to accomplish the end held out in the preceding verse,

the christian followers must be transformed from being the slaves to the gross habits of the world in which they live, into creatures and beings of a more spiritualized cast of character. They cannot serve two masters : the Gospel and the world : God and Mammon : the flesh and the spirit :—for “the one killeth, but the other giveth life.” They must therefore abandon the one, if they are desirous of the other. In other words, they must be transformed by the *renewing of their minds*—without which, it seems, they cannot prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

In the third verse we see exemplified one of the purest, humblest, most devout, yet most discerning spirits and understandings which ever moved the heart of man. “For I say (says this great and truly inspired Apostle)—through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

Observe, again, my brethren—the Apostle, as before, commences this admirable strain of exhortation and reasoning, by divesting himself of all personal assumption—of all personal

consequence. He says, "through the grace given unto me;" thus clothing himself with humility—and converting, if I may so speak, this very vestment of humility into a robe of dignity and grandeur—by calling upon his converts to obey the injunctions which he lays down—because they are the suggestions of the spirit; because they are the effusions of *grace*; given, or sent down, from on high—because, in short, God the Father speaks, through the interposition of the Apostle, whom he sends to convert an untoward, and proud, and backsliding generation.

The four verses which follow the preceding, may be considered as an illustration of it; too full and too particular to allow of any additional comment on the present occasion. But in the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses, St. Paul resumes the energetic and persuasive topics which seem to have pressed themselves upon his mind at the opening of the chapter; for he exhorts the proud and perverse Romans, with all the authority of a master, yet with all the affection of a parent, to "let love be without dissimulation: to abhor that which is evil: to cleave to that which is good: to be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love: in honour pre-

fering one another : not to be slothful in business—but fervent in spirit—serving the Lord—and then adding, in the same strain of sound good sense, accurate knowledge of human character, and comprehensive view of devotional duties—adding, I say, in the words of my text, “ *Rejoicing in hope—patient in tribulation—continuing instant in prayer.*”

The remainder of the chapter, as intimated at the opening of this Discourse, displays the same comprehensive and enlarged views of human nature ; and the same successful adaptation of precepts and rules which are likely to secure the peace of society, and the comfort, credit, and temporal and everlasting happiness of every member of which that society is composed.

Come we now, therefore, as the second and remaining division of this Discourse, to expatiate somewhat upon the emphatic words of which *the text is composed*. The verse, forming this text, hath three divisions—three distinct ramifications—all and each, however, engrafted upon the same indissoluble stock of christianity. First it tells us, to rejoice in hope : secondly, to be patient in tribulation — and thirdly, to continue instant in prayer.

Hope, patience, and devotion or prayer, are therefore the main objects of this particular exhortation.

We must then, in the first place, rejoice in hope : in that hope, which, as St. Paul tells the Colossians, in the 5th verse of his 1st Epistle to them, " is laid up for us in heaven." Every day's acquaintance with human life, teaches us the fickleness of our schemes, and the fallacies of our calculations. No man can be satisfied—can be thoroughly, absolutely satisfied—with the events, circumstances, and occurrences in which he mingles either from necessity or from choice. Something better—something more consolatory—more substantial—more refined, or more spiritualised—had previously entered within his views ; and he finds it not in those scenes towards which he hastens for participation. What is the consequence ? Repeated disappointment produces repeated anxiety : failure begets distrust : distrust engenders vexation—vexation brings on misery, and misery peradventure ends in despair. The christian retires within himself : " Why art thou so full of heaviness O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me ?" Religion answers—" Put thy trust in God : " believe and hope

in him—and if your hope be so directed, St. Paul says, “REJOICE in such hope.” There is no season, whether of prosperity or of adversity, in which it may not operate to your soul’s comfort. It elevates affluence ; it sustains endurance of temptation ; it cheers despondency ; it is the poor man’s sure stay and constant comfort ; it irradiates the cell of misery and misfortune, and gives to earthly things and images, the hue and exhilarating aspect of things above. There is nothing which it may not exalt, invigorate, and purify. But this heavenly hope must be *persevered* in—we must *rejoice* in it : we must not call it a safe counsellor to day, and a treacherous adviser to-morrow : we must in our *very hearts* be convinced, that it is sent from a gracious God to be our support under our sufferings, and to give us a “ happy issue out of all our afflictions.”

The next division, my brethren, contained in the words of the text, is, “ patience under tribulation.” But upon this we need not dwell for any length of time. It is a necessary result of the first division. Patience is the offspring of hope. If we rejoice in hope, we cannot, or ought not to, fail to be patient in tribulation. It is in tribulation that the

exercise of christian patience must be exemplarily shewn. When hope hath fortified the heart—when the spirit can say—“ O put thy trust in God, for I will yet give him thanks, which is the help of my countenance and my God”—the grosser passions, which assault the body, will be speedily brought under subjection — “ not returning evil for evil, but, contrariwise, blessing.” Tribulation, and sorrow, and anguish, are the elements in which the practice of hope and patience is exhibited under its most trying but most triumphant form. And who, among the sons of men, shall expect to move from the cradle to the grave, without *some* portion, more or less, of this tribulation, and sorrow, and anguish? It is fallacy to suppose that we can any of us “ live through our little day ” without a participation of this world’s afflictions. We are born for trouble as the sparks fly upwards; but God Almighty, in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, hath directed us to those fountains of living waters, where not only our thirst shall be slaked, but our souls nourished, strengthened, and purified, for the kingdom which is prepared for us above.

I come now, in the last place, and as the third division of the text, to dwell upon St.

Paul's most emphatic exhortation—"the *continuing instant in prayer.*" "As for me, says the pious and enraptured David, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. In the evening, and morning, and at noon day will I pray, and that *instantly*, and he shall hear my voice." This was most probably uppermost in the Apostle's mind: for should our hope be of an equivocal nature—should it produce rather calm acquiescence than vital joy—the joy which the Apostle meant—should it satisfy our reason, without touching and comforting our hearts: and, again, should our *patience* be of an equally lukewarm and equivocal character—should it desert us in tribulation, but be manifested only in an even tenor, or well conditioned state of human affairs—then, in either, or in both cases, the recourse to PRAYER—the continuing *instant in prayer*—might renew the half extinguished flame of reliance and devotedness to God. We might pray for this very hope, and this very patience, which, through any *other* channel, could not possibly be administered to us. But, if prayer be a bounden duty, which we have regularly discharged—if, too, in addition to continuing instant in our devotions, we have rejoiced in hope, and been patient in

tribulation—think, oh! think, my brethren, with what approbation before the Deity, with what solace to our own hearts, with what comfort to our families, and prosperity in our callings, will the constant exercise of this hallowed duty be invariably attended!

When every thing else fails, prayer is the never failing refuge of a christian. When friends forsake, or fortune frowns, you know that your heavenly father will neither forsake nor frown upon you—if you approach him, as a dutiful child, in prayer and supplication, and with a contrite heart. Conceal nothing: neither palliate nor compromise. Your hearts are opened—your desires are known—and no secrets are hid—before the omniscience of your Maker. Seek him therefore while he may be found, and let his face be turned upon you with pity and compassion, rather than averted in wrath and indignation: for though the heavens are high in comparison with the earth, yet your Almighty Father, who dwelleth therein, careth for you, pitieth you, and willeth not even that a hair of your heads should perish. What unbounded love, what inconceivable beneficence, is this! And shall man—into whose nostrils the same omniscient and omnipotent being hath breathed

the breath of life—shall man be unmindful, ungrateful, and thus regardless of his temporary and eternal happiness ?

Let a purer sentiment awaken our minds, and a feeling, more allied to that of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, touch our hearts. Let us have recourse to, and continue instant in, prayer : prayer, earnest, urgent, repeated, continued ; proceeding (says a late eminent divine*) from the recesses of the soul : private, solitary : prayer for strength, for deliverance, for resignation : remembering that, whatever be the fate of our *lives*—whether we have, or have not, rejoiced in hope—or been patient in tribulation—whether our days have been crowned with plenty, or rendered desolate by misery—always, I say, remembering that, one great extremity—the hour of approaching *death* — awaits us all. What ought *then* to support us ? What *can* then support us ? PRAYER. Prayer with our blessed Saviour himself, was a refuge and a stay. During his agony, this was his comfort and support. Thrice he came back to his disciples, and thrice he returned to prayer—thrice he knelt down at a distance from them, repeating the same words—“ not mine but thy

* Paley.

will be done." His agony increased — his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground : yet he *continued instant* in prayer and supplication. The cup was by no means to pass away from him ; and, as it was his Father's *will*, he expressed his obedience, his readiness to drink, even the very dregs of bitterness of which that cup was composed.

Such was the force of prayer, as exhibited in our Saviour's conduct. May it, through life, but above all, in our DYING HOUR, and in the day of judgment, have a substantially beneficial effect upon each of us : remembering that, if we rejoice in hope, and are patient in tribulation, we shall naturally, and readily, and reverently, continue instant in prayer : hoping for pardon and forgiveness through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XXXI.

COLLOSS. 1. v.

The hope which is laid up for you in heaven.

THE earnestness with which St. Paul, at all times, exhorts the several communities he addresses, to persevere in the cause of virtue and christian morality, is particularly manifested in the Epistle from which the text is taken. The town, or rather city of Colossæ,* was situated in Phrygia, at the conflux of two rivers, in Asia Minor. During the time of St. Paul, it had lost very much of its ancient

* According to Estius (*Comment. in Epistolas Apostolicas*, 1709, folio) the town of Colossæ was situated in Upper Phrygia, not far from Hierapolis and Laodicea. Vol. ii. p. 658. Grotius says the same thing; adding, that it was known to Herodotus, Xenophon, Strabo, and Pliny; but that, shortly after the transmission of the Apostle's letter, both these cities were swallowed up by an earthquake. *Critici Sacri*, vol. viii. part ii, col. 256. Does Grotius make this inference in consequence of the *silence* of Ptolemy respecting both these cities? ("Ideo apud Ptolomæum non reperiuntur.")

splendour; and in our days it has lost almost its name as well as identity. Although learned commentators inform us that it was the most *unimportant* city of all those towns, to which the Epistles of St. Paul, now extant, were addressed — and although the Apostle himself is allowed, by the best biblical critics, never to have visited the place in *person*—yet, my brethren, you see, from the emphatic words of the text, that neither its relative insignificancy with other communities, nor the uniform absence of the author of these words, from the brethren to whom they were addressed, could divert the attention, or weaken the attachment of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, in the glorious cause of CHRISTIAN SALVATION. In imitation of his great Master, St. Paul tells the meanest of his converts that there is “hope laid up for them in heaven:” that they must lay up for themselves “treasures in heaven—where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt—and where thieves do not break through and steal.”

Like these illustrious examples, the present shepherds of Christ's flock call upon every member, however low, mean, abject, and poor—they call upon every such member of the same fold to have courage and com-

fort—for there is hope laid up for them in heaven.

Observe first, that in introducing the subject of hope, to alleviate the afflictions of his Christian brethren, St. Paul immediately connects it with *heavenly* things—the hope that points to *God*—that links us with another world—that leads us to anticipate a state of happiness hereafter. And, assuredly, *we* must all cherish a *similar* hope, if we would wish for a similar successful conclusion to our earthly pilgrimage.

Hope is indeed the best friend, and the most constant comforter, of man: and, as hath been truly, as well as poetically, expressed—“It travels through, nor quits us when we die.” Without it, all is dim, and dreary, and heart chilling in this world. Without it, each morning brings its lustre in vain. Day succeeds to day, but creation is as a vast blank. There is neither sun to irradiate, nor are there showers to fructify. All the vast and splendid canopy of millions of worlds, that nightly irradiate the vault of heaven, would, without the consoling assurances of *religious hope*, be as so many comparatively uninteresting spots in the mantle of heaven. In short, what would be the gratifications re-

sulting from the most exquisite enjoyment of external objects, unless something animated the heart of man to look for more perfect fruition than can be derived from a combination of every object of earthly gratification? And why, my brethren, is this conclusion drawn? Or rather—why is this truth so palpable? Because, here, all is variable, and uncertain, and fleeting. The tempest sweeps away our dwelling. Disaster changes our property. Misfortune frustrates our schemes; and death takes us from every thing of which we revelled in the enjoyment. It is this certain and sudden change of things—this fearful reverse—this self-evident mutability of every thing earthly—that teaches us, first of all, to hope better things; and, secondly, to let that hope point to HEAVEN.

If, from a proposition so clear, and a deduction equally manifest, the question be asked—as it naturally *may* be asked—do not *all* men, therefore, indulge this hope? I answer, no: not only all men do not indulge it, but comparatively, I fear, a small portion of mankind indulges it. Yet it hath been said that we must all indulge hope: we must all anticipate better things, and more prosperous events:—because no man is satis-

fied with his present condition. It is admitted that this feeling, or passion, must, generally speaking, operate throughout society. But, the particular point for your consideration, and which I trust will not fail to be satisfactorily proved, is, that there are *two sorts* or kinds of hope animating the human frame : the one, earthly, selfish, and as connected only with our interests on this side the grave : the other, of a higher and more commanding cast of character ; composed of purer and less abased materials ; serene, constant, unshaken, religious, spiritualised. I mean, the hope inculcated in the words of my text—the “ *hope that is laid up for you in heaven.*”

We will now more particularly illustrate this important doctrine.

As long as God hath gifted us with properties similar to such as we now possess — and which are wisely so given, in order that we may try and prove ourselves — so long shall we be dissatisfied with our present condition : always expecting, always hoping, some acquisition of fortune or of fame. A man, even uninstructed in Christian principles, might justly reason thus—but, for a man enlightened by a knowledge of the gospel of Christ—invigorated by its divine

benevolence and love—thus *exclusively* to reason, is both ridiculous and monstrous. We will first describe mere earthly hope.

There dwells a man, admired, we will say, for his mere wealth and splendour; and respected even by his generally correct and humane conduct. He has become rich from that species of perseverance which stops at nothing—is satisfied with nothing—till the most complicated schemes are realised: till the most painful, unremitting, obstinately continued plans have been all crowned with success. The splendour of his establishment—the costliness of his fare—and the respectability of his connections—all bespeak the influence of *one* power, which he unquestionably possesses; and that is, the power of *wealth*. Now, the advantages of earthly hope, illustrated by this example, would be, the *resting satisfied* with—the tranquillity resulting from—such prosperous condition: but how *can* a man be thoroughly satisfied and tranquil with mere wealth *alone*? A different scene must mingle with that which is before described. He must settle his family. He must establish wider connections by the marriage of his children—or, if he be childless, he must try what can be done with

the application of his revenues in some different way or undertaking. But let us pursue the former, which is the general case. His children must be settled, and perhaps they disappoint him. They will not be dragged as victims to the altar of *avarice*. They will not give their hands without their hearts: or, they are disobedient, and worthless: or, again, to give the argument its full force in favour of *earthly* hope — they are obedient, and are united with those between whom there is a perfect reciprocity of affectionate feeling.

What follows? Will this parent—unless he bless God for having lived to see his children thus comfortably provided for—unless he look forward for another state when he is to meet them again yet more united, now that he must himself very shortly quit this world—will this parent, I say—*can* this parent be happy, totally divested of every such feeling just described? The conclusion, according to my humble apprehension, must be, in the denial of his final happiness in *this world*. But only, my brethren, let us change or chequer a little the scene before described. Suppose his daughter dies. Suppose his son falls, as so many brave and excel-

lent young men have of late fallen, in the service of his country? Suppose accident, disaster, or any common calamity, either slow or swift in its progress, to overtake him? How feels his heart then? How does he meet it? Where is his courage, his patience, his endurance, his resignation? Can *he* look to God for comfort, who hath deserted the *Creator* for the *creature*?

Believe me, there is not a more melancholy, heart-distressing, awful scene, than that of witnessing old age bereft of religious heavenly hope: of a man, in the course of nature very speedily to quit this world, unprepared, and uniformly indifferent all his life, about the world which is to come. Far from you—from all near and dear to you—when old age *does* arrive—be such a state of feeling and of things. May that cheerful, animating, constant, and inexhaustible comfort, which has all along sustained you upon the wings of *heavenly hope*, be your support and consolation... as your eyes are closing for ever upon this world.

In order, however, that it may not be said I have selected an example more favourable to the illustration of my hypothesis of worldly hope than the generality of examples war

rants, let me submit, equally to your very earnest consideration, an instance, perhaps, which may come more frequently under your experience.

Take then a common case. A man in moderate circumstances—but equally animated by a desire of more—equally influenced by mere earthly hope—a stranger to vital Christianity—but perhaps an observer of Sabbath worship once—regularly—on the Sunday—while a greater portion of the same day, which God hath told us should be set apart for himself, is devoted to the service of Mammon. Such a character, being a Christian only in name—a mere negative observer of Sabbath duties—is, strictly and honestly speaking, only animated by earthly hope: toiling, nevertheless, from morn till night; equally anxious with the absolutely rich man for the enlargement of possessions—looking only to the increase of credit and of consequence—braving difficulties, spurning dangers, combating opposition, counteracting stratagems, and, in short, evincing an heroism and a courage which want only a *better cause* to render him an object of admiration. A serious and rational Christian must pity such a man from the bottom of his heart: because

there is, in truth, no foundation laid for that happiness which we are told will last for ever in another world. There is no ray of heavenly hope which dawns upon his soul. Sickness comes—life waxes fainter and fainter—this world is receding from his view—his friends are bewailing around him : and he too, perhaps, is bewailing at having laid up no provision for the sustenance of his soul!—at having indulged *earthly*, to the uniform exclusion of *heavenly*, hope. Ah, my brethren ! you, who have children to survive you, do, I entreat you, shew them that most useful and invaluable example—when *your* latter moments arrive—of quitting life with the assured hope, through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ your Saviour, that heaven will be your resting place hereafter.

It now remains, agreeably to the intimation thrown out at the commencement of this Discourse, to say a few words upon the character and ultimate effect of HEAVENLY HOPE.

Our Saviour says, that we must not lay up our chief treasures upon earth—where the casualties of this life will inevitably take them from us—where accident or violence constantly prevails—where rust corrupts, and

thieves break through and steal. St. Paul tells his community, whom he is so anxious to convert from Paganism to Christianity, among the very first precepts contained in his exhortation—to strive for “the hope which is laid up for them in heaven, whereof they heard before, in the word of the truth of the Gospel,” that is, as one of our best commentators* has explained it, “Christian hope, being fastened on a rich treasure in heaven, the reward of all your good works, makes you very liberal of your earthly treasure—which is fully agreeable to the doctrine of the gospel of Christ.” You see, therefore, my brethren, the comprehensiveness of this definition of heavenly hope—that it induces the wealthy to be liberal, while it encourages the poor not to despond. It is more especially to this latter branch of the definition—which shall form the conclusion of my Discourse,—that the subsequent remarks are directed.

Whoever has cast, even an eye of common care, upon the occurrences of human life, must see, from the preponderancy of evil over good, of pain over pleasure, and poverty over riches, that something more soothing

* Hammond.

and substantial than mere worldly consolation should be imparted to the desolate and oppressed : something that more immediately comes down from heaven, and draws us thitherward in return. Not fame, nor learning, nor wealth, nor power, nor sensual gratifications — but something connected with MIND and SOUL : lifting us above this jarring scene of things — refining our affections — purifying our hearts — exalting our spirits — raising us from the creature to the Creator. A man of a gross or world-bustling spirit may neither see nor admit the truth of this remark : but God be praised, his divine works, moral and physical, appear equally tame and inert in the estimation of such a character : nor can the laws of the Almighty be ever explained or enforced by lips so inadequate to declare their praise.

A tolerably well-cultivated mind—and I wish to address myself to neither the over-refined nor wholly ignorant—must, it is presumed, admit the conclusion before drawn : that man in this world “ never is—but always to be blest.” A secret, but strong, cord of connection must therefore bind us to a world neither corrupted nor gone astray—and that

cord, or tie, or link, I would call—the hope which the Apostle describes—the *hope which is laid up for us in heaven*.

Like charity, this hope endureth all things. The deserted orphan or the desolate widow—the parent, without one child left to smooth the pillow of death—the afflicted mourner—he, who has seen all worldly schemes fail, and worldly friends forsake him—the meek—the poor in spirit—such characters will, in an especial manner, acknowledge the force and consolation of heavenly hope. We were all born for trouble, and must all expect it: and it is the chief duty, the soundest sense, and the surest stay, in all our troubles and adversities whensoever they oppress us, to fly to the refuge which such hope administers. Ever since the world was created, God hath not withheld his mercy and compassion. He hath never refused to pour into the contrite spirit, that hope, which, like his own peace, passeth all *adequate* conception and understanding. This it was which cheered Adam on his expulsion from Paradise. It was personated in the Brazen Serpent on which the dying Israelites only looked, and they were saved. It animated the Son of God and Man, in all his toils and

sufferings for our salvation. It was the angel that comforted him in the garden of Gethsemane;—the spirit that sustained him in his agonies upon the cross; and that made the malefactor entreat him to remember him when he reached his own kingdom. And further, it was this celestial and invigorating hope that cheered the Disciples, and Apostles, and noble army of Martyrs, long after our Saviour had breathed into them the influences of the Holy Spirit. It was this, which laid open to St. Stephen the glories of heaven, and amidst the excruciating agonies of his martyrdom (the first of Christian martyrs!) to exclaim—“ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” That it may have *somewhat* of a like influence upon every one here assembled—both in the hour of death and in the day of judgment—God in his infinite mercy grant, through the intercession, and for the sake of his dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XXXII.

1 COR. xv. 51, 52.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

THERE are few subjects which so forcibly occupy our attention, or rather our serious meditation, as that of a future state : of an hereafter, which is to seal our everlasting misery or everlasting happiness : when, in the language of the Collect for the service of this season, Christ shall come again, in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and dead—and we are to rise to the life immortal. This will be the SECOND and LAST ADVENT ; and towards which our celebration, as now, of the *first* Advent, should invariably incline. The particular manner in which that great and

tremendous scene is to be opened, is in part and most vividly described in the words of my text. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed:" that is, we shall not all be in our graves. All of us will not have paid the debt of nature: the sower and the reaper in the field, as well as the monarch seated on his throne, will equally feel the effects of this change—which the apostle immediately subjoins, will take place, "in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye." A more sudden transition cannot be conceived: and the consequences will be as decisive as they are sudden. The signal for this wonderful and simultaneous change with millions of our fellow creatures will be the sound of the trump—of the last trump—"for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised."

There is something very impressive, as well as unusual, in this description of the signal and summons which is to rouse us from earthly to immortal scenes. A summons, as irreversible as instantaneous!—and thus roused, we crowd together to witness its awful result. And here the apostle gives us a brief but glowing sketch of this result—"The dead (says he) shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The first part of these

words is sufficiently explanatory. We are no longer to be subject to corruption, or decay—never perhaps to feel a diminution of our strength—never certainly to have any indication of the approach of dissolution. The latter part, “being changed”—has been thought by some to allude to an alteration of *person*, *figure*, or *form*—to an alteration of shape, as well as of *spirit*,—but upon this, it is of little consequence to dwell. If we are to be completely and inconceivably *happy*—as our organs will be made to enjoy every possible degree of happiness—it is of no consequence how we are moulded, or how we may be changed. The apostle does indeed, in my humble apprehension, go on, in the next verse to explain the present—by making it applicable to a *more general* change: that is, by contrasting *corruption* with *incorruption*,—and mortality with immortality. But in the first chapter of the same Apostle’s epistles to the Colossians, and at the 28th verse, St. Paul speaks sentiments somewhat more positively on this subject, as thus—“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom: that we may *present every man* perfect in Christ Jesus.” “Hence, in another world, he expected that he should

know, and be known to, those his converts—and that their relation should subsist and be retained between them.”*

In a few verses preceding the text, a more decisive and a most remarkable observation is made, relating to this change—which must, to every thinking, and still more to every virtuous and religious mind, be matter of heartfelt consolation. St. Paul says—“As we have borne the image of the *earthly*, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*.” And what are the sentiments of the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, St. John? That Apostle, in the 2nd verse of the 3rd chap. of his first Epistle General, thus remarks: “Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what *we shall be*: but we know that, when we shall appear, we shall be *like him*; for we shall see him as he is.† And every man that hath thus hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Now, taking these observations collectively, and summing up, as it were, all the detached explanations which have been submitted to you, they amount, seriously and pointedly, to this: The day of judgment will come *suddenly*—as a thief in the night—says our Saviour. But

* Paley. See Note A. p. 441. post. † See Note B. post.

when? God only knows; none of his angels and ministering spirits being permitted to a participation of that knowledge—so high, so serious, and so awful, it seems to be considered! Some of us, indeed, perhaps as many as are now living, will be awake—will be busied in avocations and pursuits; eager of gain; eager of fame; eager perhaps of every earthly, in exclusion of every heavenly object. We shall then find, that, although sufficiently awake in *one* sense, we have been most grossly asleep in *another*. Our bodies will have been sufficiently active, and attentive to the gratification of their wants: but our souls, our better parts, benumbed, stupified, and dormant: untouched by the grace of heaven; unconscious of the work of salvation: ungrateful for all the mercies vouchsafed unto us! And how will it be startled on being thus roused—by the piercing sound of the last trump—? What sensations will pervade—what fears, terrors, and anxieties possess it!? But immortality follows—a never ending state of existence:—never again to sleep—and, admitted into the realms of rest, never again to grieve and to mourn. The storms, which agitated us in this miserable and tumultuous ocean of life, will have ceased to rage and to vex: the vessel will have reached

its destined port : calmness, sunshine, peace, felicity, immeasurable and eternal, will be the reward of the blessed. All this my brethren is, to say the least, a very serious and important summary of the explanations offered, in detail, of the words of the text. Let us therefore attend to it more rigidly and closely.

The first striking reflection which we cannot fail to make, is, that the present is an *uncertain*, as well as a *short*, state of existence: that, scarcely sensible of the means and end of it during the earlier years of our life—we hardly begin to have our faculties directed and matured—we hardly begin to be of comfort and utility to others—before the hand of death intervenes, and hurries us to our graves. In a state therefore thus unsettled, it behoves us to consider of the folly of endeavouring to set up our tabernacles of sure and lasting rest : of not carrying with us, wheresoever we go, a consciousness of its frailty—a deep sense of the necessity of making it instrumental to every wise and good purpose—and a resolution *so* to live, that, when the last trump shall sound, whether sleeping in our graves, or musing like Isaac in the fields at even tide, we may be found prepared, resigned, and worthy of being admitted into the mansions of immortal bliss.

This brings us, in the second place, to consider that, however short and uncertain our earthly period may be, it is designed by God Almighty as a period of *probation*—wherein we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. These latter scriptural expressions have a very important meaning; and denote how foolish, how presumptuous, and how perfectly insane we shall be, if we suppose that this state of probation is *sure* of rendering us happy hereafter, on the *exclusive* ground of our *merits* and virtuous qualities—on the ground of what we conceive to be constant practical good—without a deeply rooted faith in the mercies and power of Christ to save; without a fear of offending him; without a trembling dread and consciousness of our many and gross imperfections; and without a calm, constant, serious, and deeply-rooted hope and dependance upon that Almighty power which created us, and frequent prayers offered up that our misdeeds may be blotted out of the book of life!

To a Christian thus impressed; to a soldier of this stamp, fighting under the banners of his Redeemer; life brings with it no idle apprehensions—no fearful alarms—let it be short, and let it be probationary. On the


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contrary, such a Christian rejoices at its frailty and fickleness—because he knows, when his body is consigned to its native dust, that his period of trial being over, he is only journeying on, upon the wings of Christian faith, to repose in the bosom of his father Abraham. To such a one, then, the last trump shall sound—but what *terrors* does this sound impart? Our blessed Saviour shall come, in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead — but what *fear* shall the sound of his voice convey? “Come,” says Christ, “faithful labourer in my vineyard—inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.”

It remains to see how we may each, in our several vocations, so conduct ourselves, that life, however uncertain, and however a state of trial and probation, may bring with it a thousand consolations, and terminate in a happy immortality: so that, at the second coming of our Lord Jesus, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may be found acceptable in his sight. One of the wisest and most serious objects of our existence is, to have a constant fear of offending HIM, whose eye is always upon our outgoings and incomings. Whether within our chamber in secret, or in

the open air in public, do not let us forget to consider that we are subject to omniscience and omnipotence—and that this super-human power has created us to live hereafter; previously to which future state, we are to be assembled, at the blast of the trump,—“for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” We must live then TO-DAY, as if we were prepared to go into eternity TOMORROW. All our zeal, all our faith, all our fortitude, and all our resignation must bend to this momentous point—the great leading feature of human existence: for which we dare to live, nor fear to die. The profligate man, if he will only pause a little and reflect, and feel a disposition to examine thoroughly his past conduct—the profligate man, I say, will exclaim in some such language as this—“To what will all my worthlessness and debaucheries tend? and how many more hearts must I break before I am judged ripe for everlasting destruction? O, horrid thought! A voice calls upon me to prepare, and I must be swept from this world, the scene of all my vitiated happiness, to meet a stern and irreconcilable judge in ONE, who, if I had only been humble, and virtuous, and devout,



would have opened his parental arms to shelter and to bless me! But is there *no* time left—no opportunity for effectual *parley* and *delay*? There is none. This night my soul is to be required of me—and I shall stand upon the brink of eternity, shuddering to think of the abyss which opens to receive me!” Shun, therefore, my brethren, a course of life—shun the indulgence of those principles, which would lead you to the confines of the grave, and to contemplate the last day, with such emotions—as those I have been just describing. Why should the innocent man fear an impartial judge—however vested in his robes of authority?—or however even, as in this instance, clothed with all the splendour and all the terrors of omnipotence? From your cradle up to this moment, you have been taught to look forward to this trial; and you have also been furnished with such instructions, and fortified with such arms, as may enable you, if only willing to wield them, to meet your Almighty Judge, and to stand up in the great day of universal trial, like MEN, in whom the spirit of God has brought forth PURE, RIPE, and IMMORTAL FRUIT. Be yours then the task and the triumph, to look constantly forward towards

your latter and irreversible change—to the second and great Advent of Christ — with the energies, the confidence, and humility of Christians ; always, while upon earth, remembering how vain and hopeless it is to be endeavouring to set up your tabernacles of permanent rest and comfort, where every thing around you is hourly changing its colour and its substance—where the child, in whom you fondly hoped, and the parent whom you thought was always to be your shield and protection, is, ere the rising of the morning sun, stiffened at the touch of death. **HERE**, therefore, upon this frail and variable scene, so live, that you may constantly address your Father who is in heaven, and say, “ Whensoever it pleaseth thy wise and divine purpose, that I should go hence and be no more seen, take me under the shadow of thy wings, as I have lived under the constant fear of thy displeasure—as I have trusted in the Redeemer whom thou hast sent to save me :— and as a conviction of, and reliance upon, my own unassisted merits, never once occupied my thoughts, or lulled my conscience into a treacherous acquiescence.”

So, my brethren, in conclusion, speaks and acts a genuine disciple of Christ Jesus : so

heroically and so calmly does *that* man resign his last breath, who has looked upon earth as a mere transient and probationary scene, qualified nevertheless to enable him to be of benefit to his fellow creatures, and to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He has not lived mechanically, as some inert, thoughtless, and contemptibly-affected characters profess to live—but soberly, diligently, active in good services, casting away the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light : the friend, as well as the compassionater, of the whole human race. And why may not *every* individual, here present, thus live, and thus meet his latter end? Why may not every one, baptised at Christ's fount, shew forth the excellences and inestimable benefits of that religion unto which he has been made a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? It is because every one does not choose to place nearest to his heart, the salutary precepts of the Gospel—because, under the dominion of sin, which we have not the courage to throw aside, we become cowards in the cause of vital Christianity. We suffer our imaginations to be foolishly scared, at terrors, which *guilty consciences* only ought to feel ; and

what is engendered by these chimerical and baneful influences, although it be a mere shadowy phantom, assumes the gigantic form and horrid aspect of a fiend!

And where now—oh, perturbed disconsolate disciple of Christ! where now are the comforts of the religion in which you have been baptised, and which you have professed to put in practice? Has a Redeemer suffered and rose from the dead in vain, and barred for ever all entrance into a future paradise? Moulded in the image of your Maker, and heir of everlasting life, are these the returns which you make for all the supreme happiness reserved in another world?! And why should the anticipation of the sound of the “last trump” fill you, thus born and thus gifted, with alarms, which, to say the least, ought rather to possess the *Pagan* than the Christian? Away then with these ill-grounded fears and chimerical apprehensions! Your religion is built upon a rock. Can any superficial reasoning or sceptical declamation prevail aught against it? It should not: it *will* not—it *cannot*—in a mind thoroughly sensible of virtuous and religious impulses. Think therefore of your latter end constantly and seriously—but let not such a thought

confound and distress you. You have led a good, a useful, and Christian-like life—and this will bring you to a quiet and happy end.

The Lamb of God is sitting at the right hand of his august Father to make intercession for you—and being thoroughly persuaded of this, and confident in the great and everlasting promises of the Gospel, you will be expected to bear up against that moment, which is to tear you from your relatives and friends, with the exemplary energies of one, for whom the blood of a Redeemer has not been shed in vain.

The last trump shall then sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed: but—changed from the image of the earthly to the image of the heavenly. Christ shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead—but we, living the life, and dying the death, of the righteous, shall be meet to enter into that illustrious assembly, who, bending lowly at the footstool of the Lamb, and offering up their crowns of unfading gold, cease not day and night to say, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty—that was—and is—and is to come!! And the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed you,

and shall lead you unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.

NOTE A, p. 430.

It has always appeared to me a little extraordinary, that PALEY should have laid so much stress on the probable meaning and force of the verse here quoted from St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. His words are these: "But for a *specific text*, I know none that speaks the thing more positively than this which I have chosen. St. Paul, you see, expected that he should know, and be known to, those his converts; that their relation should subsist, and be retained between them; and with this hope he laboured and endeavoured, instantly and incessantly, that he might be able at last to present them perfect in Christ Jesus. Now, what St. Paul appeared to look for as to the general continuance, or rather revival of our knowledge of each other after death, every man who strives, like St. Paul, to attain to the resurrection of the dead, may expect as well as he." A little before he thus speaks. "The clause is this, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;" by which I understand St. Paul to express his hope and prayer, that, at the general judgment of the world, he might present to Christ the fruits of his ministry; the converts whom he had made to his faith and religion; and might present them perfect in every good work. And if this be rightly interpreted, then it affords a manifest and necessary inference, that the Saints, in a future life, WILL MEET AND BE KNOWN AGAIN TO ONE ANOTHER; for how, without knowing again his converts in their new and glorified state, could St Paul desire

or expect to present them at the last day?" *Sermon, XXXIV.*

In observing on the text of St Paul, and on this construction put upon it by the acute commentator here quoted, my feelings are, not so much whether Paley be, or be not, right in that construction—but that, it might seem as if a KNOWLEDGE OF EACH OTHER, in a future life, depended upon such a *previous qualification* as the converts or disciples of St. Paul had received from that consummate teacher of Christianity: and farther, as if there were no text, or texts, in scripture, which induced a belief in a similar doctrine, from positions more generally applicable, and to the full as strong as that adduced by Paley. In other words, are the many millions of Christians who have departed this life “in the faith and fear” of their divine Master, as sure of a re-union with, and recognition of, each other—as those who may have been taught at the hands of an especial master, or instructor—and, extending this chain of argument a little farther—what ARE the qualifications requisite for such an assurance of recognition in a state of blessedness?

In answering these queries, I shall adopt two methods: first, I shall endeavour to prove that the inference drawn by Paley from the particular verse first quoted (and which he adopts as the text of his Discourse), seems to be almost *peculiar to himself*; and if so, after adducing other authorities, I shall put it to the reader, whether such a peculiarity of construction exactly warrant his own, entire concurrence. Secondly, I shall endeavour to prove that there is at least ONE TEXT as encouraging, and more generally applicable to the doctrine in question, than that adduced by Paley. The second branch of this argument is necessarily referred to the following NOTE. The first, namely, what have been the opinions of several learned Commentators upon the same text? may be summarily dispatched.

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My first authority is ESTIUS ; having observed the previous, or rather few, authorities quoted in the *Critici Sacri*, vol. vii. pt. ii. col, 247-251. Estius's *Commentary upon the Apostolical Epistles* was published in two folio volumes, in the Latin language, at Hamburg, in 1709. This author is fuller on the whole verse than any of his successors : but upon "presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus," he says, "ut omnem hominem reddamus, et Deo sistamus perfectè instructum in his quæ ad fidem et cognitionem Christi pertinent, &c. Quemvis hominem prout possumus; neminem volentes a fructu Evangelii, quod prædicamus, esse exceptum." Vol. ii. p. 667. Not the slightest allusion is made to recognition of person. BENGELIUS, whose piety was equal to his learning, passes over in silence the inference drawn by Paley. He has a brief note only upon "warning every man and teaching every man." *Gnomon Nov. Test.* 1773, 4to. vol. ii. p. 959.* WETSTEN selects only the same words, referring to a similar phrase in Dio Chrysostom. *Edit. Nov. Test. Gr.* vol. ii. p. 284. MACKNIGHT thus paraphrases the passage : "at the day of judgment we may present every believer perfect in knowledge and virtue, as becomes those who are in Christ's Church." In a note, he says "that the Greek word παραστήσαμεν properly denotes the priests bringing the sacrifice or offering to the altar." Both in paraphrase and note, no stress is laid, nor even notice taken, of this passage corroborating any inference as to identity and recognition of person. Macknight on the Epistles, vol. iii. p. 515, edit. 1821, 8vo. The allusion to the "Priests sacrifices" in the "presentation," is taken from Reiner's *Biblioth. Bremens.* Class. iv. p. 976 : as referred to by Wolfius, in his *Curæ Philologicae*, vol. iv. p. 302, edit. 1741, 4to.

* In his edition of the *Greek Testament*, 1734, 4to. (*Variantis Loca*, p. 701) he is still briefer.

previous authority is JOHN HANRY SWICKE ; who published his *Commentarius Critico-Exegeticus in I. S. Pauli ad Colossenses*, (an exceedingly rare book) at Zurich, in 1699, 4to. : with *Tres Orationes Pauli* (pp. 60) at the end. Not fewer than 86 pages are devoted to the 1st chap. of this Epistle, and 7 pp. to the 28th verse. When *Suicer* comes to treat (as in the 4th section of this verse—and which, as in every sense, he calls, "Finis Preconii") of the word παραστήσαμεν—considering it more generally used in the same sense,—he refers to his explanation of it in the 32d verse at p. 54—declaring here, that it is of importance to consider what "the being perfect in Christ Jesus" is. Now, at p. 54, the unqualified sense of this "presenti" is "urging, pleading, producing etc." and he adds, "The word is adduced in corroboration of the word 'present.'"
is quotation, from Act and Paley should see

As to the second branch of this first division, "what ARE the qualifications requisite for a reunion in a state of blessedness," it is evident that the discussion of such a point would be the entering upon a wide and almost boundless field of investigation. It is sufficient if, from the preceding authorities, collectively—and more especially from the strong one of Estius—the *universal* application of the doctrine (St. Paul repeating the word "every man"—as Estius remarks) seems to be firmly established.

NOTE B, p. 430.

Of all the texts of Scripture, bearing upon a FUTURE STATE, the present seems to be among the most decisive and consoling; and, with great deference to the authority first quoted in the previous note, ONE, which has fewer doubts and difficulties attending it than that which has been selected by himself. I will begin with ESTIUS; whose diction is as eloquent as his argument is sound. After a copious discussion of the whole text, he exclaims — "Sed quomodo similes? HAUD DUBIUM QUIN ET CORPORE ET ANIMA." The whole of this particular sentence is too long for extraction. *Comment. in Epist. Apostol.* Hamb. 1709, folio, 2 vols.; vol. ii. p. 1222. The fact however is, that every Commentator, including Estius, refers to the exposition of this doctrine as contained in the memorable treatise of TERTULLIAN (the earliest of the Latin Fathers, who died about 200 years after Christ) *De Resurrectione**

* How beautiful is the following passage, towards the commencement of this treatise. "Aspice nunc ad ipsa quoque exempla divinæ potestatis. Dies moritur in noctem, et tenebris usquequoque sepelitur. Funestatur mundi honor, omnis substantia denigratur. Sordent, silent, stupent cuncta, vbique iustitium est, quies rerum. Ita lux amissa lugetur. Et tamen rursus cum suo cultu, cum dote, cum

Carnis. That treatise occurs in the third volume of Tertullian's Works, edited by Semler (*Hal. Mag.* 1770, 8vo. p. 211) now before me: but, after going through the several texts of the New Testament which that Father considered as most explanatory of the doctrine in question, a very brief notice is taken by him of this particular text. What he says, however, is short and sententious. "Tanto abest, ut simus iam quod nescimus: utique scituri si iam essemus. Adeo contemplatio est spei in hoc spatio per fidem, non præsentatio: nec possessio, sed expectatio."

WOLF, in his *Curæ Philologicæ*, vol. v. p. 274, has one or two strong and apposite passages. The former, from Vitringa's *Obs. Sacrar. lib. iii. c. 20*, may be thus rendered: "And truly it is worthy of observation, that Christ—in revealing all things which should happen on earth, even unto the Day of Judgment, to his beloved disciple John—should have passed over this mystery, or secret, ("arcantum") in almost entire silence. As however we have no distinct perception of that final allotment of eternal happiness and misery, so the faithful, who have kept the coun-

sole, eadem et integra et tota vniverso orbi reuiuiscit, interficiens mortem suam, noctem, rescindens sepulturam suam, tenebras, hæres sibimet existens, donec et nox reuiuiscat cum suo et illa suggestu. Redaccenduntur enim et stellarum radii, quos matutina succensio extinxerat. Reducuntur et syderum absentia, quos temporalis distinctio exemerat. Redornantur et specula lunæ, quæ menstruus numerus attriverat. Reuoluntur hyemes et æstates, verna et autumnus, cum suis viribus, moribus, fructibus. Quippe etiam terræ de cælo disciplina est, arbores vestire post spolia, flores denuo colorare, herbas rursus imponere, exhibere eadem quæ absumpta sunt semina: nec prius exhibere, quam absumpta. Mira ratio: de fraudatrice seruatrix: vt reddat, intercipit: vt custodiat, perdit; vt integret, vitiat: vt etiam ampliet, prius decoquit. . . . Ideo finiuntur, ut fiant. Nihil deperit, nisi in salutem. Totus igitur hic ordo reuolutionis rerum, testatio est RESURRECTIONIS MORTUORUM, &c." Vol. iii. p. 231.

sels of Christ, must be entirely ignorant of what will be their future lot in the "joy of their Lord." It should further seem, from the same authority, that the Heathens derived their doctrine of *apotheosis* from this verse. Such is the opinion of ELSNER, who adduces the commentaries upon the golden verses of Hierocles—and refers to Diogenes Laertius—in confirmation of it. The silence of Bengelius (in his Gnomon) is disappointing. Had that Editor been as communicative on this point, as on the *ἔργα τῶν ἡμῶν τεκνία*, (in a previous chapter) his learning and piety might have produced a more satisfactory result. See vol. ii. page 1223, 1229. Macknight, in his Commentary, thus paraphrases the entire verse. "Beloved, though despised and persecuted in the world, even *now we are the children of God. But it doth not yet appear how glorious, both in body and mind, we the children of God shall be.* However we know, that when Christ shall appear to judge the world, we shall become him, for we shall see him as he is, and be for ever with him." Vol. vi. p. 65. See his three notes on this verse; of which the second is particularly comforting and convincing.

It is a pity that, on this subject, we have not the opinion of the best Commentator (LAMPE) on the writings of St. John. I possess his "*Commentarius Analytico-Exegeticus*, 1727, 4to. 3 vols., upon the Gospel of that Apostle, and his "*Dissertationes Ulteriores*," 1737, 4to. 2 vols.: but look in vain, among the latter, for an elucidation of the point in question.

May not the Summary be this? When Christ appeared on earth, he took upon him our fashion and infirmities, sin excepted. When we shall re-appear in heaven, we may be endued, in return, with some *portion* of similarity to himself: to his glorious, eternal, and ineffable majesty. Our "likeness" (as Macknight particularly remarks) will not impart "*equality*," but "*similarity*" to Christ.

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As before observed, authors without number and end, may be consulted upon this subject; and, not the least of them, the incomparable PEARSON; but the foregoing may be sufficient for the immediate object in view.







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